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ABSTRACT

Part of a series exploring how language influences and is influenced by educational processes, this book describes difficulties boys and girls experience in learning to read and write due to gendered divisions of labor. The book draws on an ethnographic study that followed 13 children from kindergarten through second grade and found that, in learning to read and write, children construct gendered identities and negotiate their social relations with parents, siblings, teachers, and peers; thus even in learning literacy, traditional gender roles in family, school, and society are often unwittingly perpetuated. The book's chapters are: (1) "Learning about Literacy from Children," presenting the assumptions of prevailing research perspectives: emergent literacy, social construction of literacy, and literacy as social status and identity; (2) "The Roots of Literacy Learning in Families," introducing four of the children and their families and showing how literacy is grounded in family relations and how children constructed their own orientations toward literacy; (3) "Literacy Instruction in the Kindergarten Classroom," presenting the pedagogical context of children's literacy learning, and the approach to literacy learning in the kindergarten and its theoretical basis in the various perspectives on literacy; (4) "Children's Orientations toward Literacy in Kindergarten," comparing the classroom literacy learning of two children, and showing that children's responses to a teacher's pedagogical approach result from literacy orientations they had constructed at home; (5) "Tensions in Children's Kindergarten Literacy Learning," focusing on sources of tension in children's literacy learning and in the teacher's choices as related to gender and work issues; (6) "Beyond Stereotypes: The Complexity of Negotiating Gender and Work Relations in Literacy Learning," considering how structuring processes in the family and classroom related to work and gender affect individual literacy learning; (7) "Continuity and Change in First and Second Grade," examining continuity and change in four children's orientations toward literacy; and (8) "Reflections on the Journey," offering final observations on literacy, gender, and work, and arguing that theoretical perspectives that allow fuller and more complex understandings of emergent literacy are needed. An appendix summarizes the data collected on the children. Contains over 200 references. (TM)

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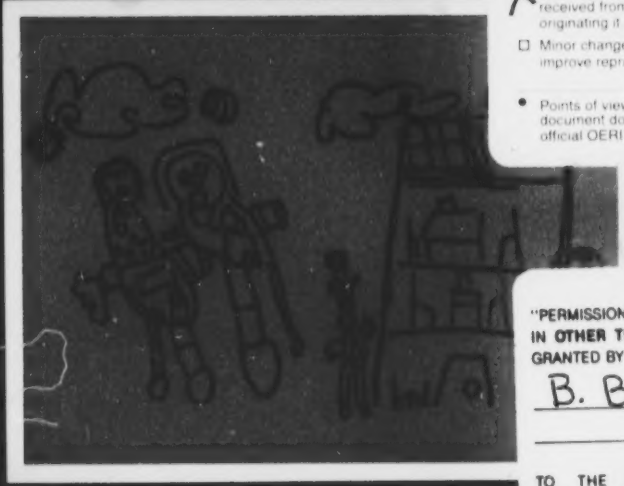

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LITERACY, GENDER, & WORK

In Families And In School

Judith W. Solsken

LANGUAGE & EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES
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LITERACY, GENDER, AND WORK

IN FAMILIES AND IN SCHOOL

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LITERACY, GENDER, AND WORK

IN FAMILIES AND IN SCHOOL

Judith W. Solsken

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

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To Jennifer
who taught me how to learn from children

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Preface to the Series

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

This series of volumes provides a forum for the exploration of how language in use influences and is influenced by educational processes. The volumes in this series reflect the diverse theories, methods, and findings about the roles and functions of language in educational processes. The common theme across these volumes is an understanding of the central role that language plays in education. Of particular concern is the need to make visible the often invisible influences of language on what and how students learn or fail to learn from participating in various educational processes throughout their lives.

Education and language are viewed as diverse and situated processes. Thus, to understand the role and function of language in the education of individuals and social groups, we must understand how language functions in and across various educational situations—in the home, in prekindergarten through high school, in college, in the workplace, and in post-graduate and professional education.

Scholars working on the nexus of language and education from the perspective of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, ethnomethodology, ethnography of communication, literary theory, sociology of language, cognitive psychology, lingustics and related areas are invited to submit monographs and edited collections of original papers to the series editor for review by the editorial board.

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Preface

Like all offspring, this book began in a relationship—a relationship that, despite my name as sole author on the cover, remains central to its history and present identity. Telling the story of that relationship is one way of grounding what I have to say about literacy, gender, and work in families and in school. For ideas, unlike children, do not really take on lives of their own. They remain intimately embedded in the lives of people and their relationships with each other, growing and changing as those people and relationships grow and change.

In the first chapter of this book, I tell the story of my relationship with teachers Susan Benedict, Jim Sullivan, and Marilyn Gundersheim, who were my co-researchers in the study of children's literacy upon which the book is based. In that telling of the story, the focus is on the ideas that motivated the study, guided its methodology, and grew and changed as we worked together. Here, my wish is to honor the people and our evolving relationship as sources of profound learning and deep joy. I count the time spent in their classrooms and in their company among the most stimulating and fulfilling in my life. To thank them for their contributions to this book does not begin to acknowledge what working with them has meant to me, but I thank them anyway.

Several other people joined our research team for stretches along the way. Their contributions to data collection and analysis are outlined in the appendix of this book, but each also played a unique part in the life of the classrooms and the collaboration. I am grateful to Jean McClellan, Lenore Carlisle, Anne Homza, Elizabeth Pardon, Laura Hirsch, and Jerilyn Kolbin for their participation in this project. Others supported the research effort in tangible ways as well. Principal Justin O'Connor not only made it easy for us to work in his school, but also showed enthusiastic interest in what we were doing. The University of Massachusetts School of Education provided funds for assistance in data collection; and the Director of the School of Education's Office of Research and Development, Stan Scarpati, provided funds for assistance in data analysis and a supportive reading of the results. More for love of learning than for money,

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Margaret Phinney tirelessly and cheerfully catalogued and analyzed data during one hot summer.

The writing of the manuscript was nurtured by many receptive and thoughtful respondents to drafts and conference presentations. My thanks to Susan Benedict, Jean McClellan, David Bloome, Patrick Sullivan, Linda Miller Cleary, Margaret Phinney, Elaine Vine, the students in the Seminar on Literacy, Adrian Bennett, Carole Edelsky, Jenny Cook-Gumperz, and several anonymous reviewers. Joan Rasool, Irv Seidman, and Cathy Walsh supported the work of writing with their unfailing interest and empathy, and Henry Giroux provided the stimulus and the references that initiated a crucial shift in theoretical perspective. The final form of the manuscript gained depth and clarity from the careful attention of my editors, Judith Green and Ginger Weade, to both the text and the writer.

I have saved for last those to whom my gratitude is greatest and least expressible: the children and families who generously shared their lives with me and gave me permission to tell stories about them. Knowing them has been a privilege and responsibility that has demanded much from me and given even more. If these pages capture some small part of their intelligence, their dignity, and their vitality, then the stories may begin to repay my debt to them.

chapter 1
Learning about Literacy from Children

One day in kindergarten Luke described a monster as "tornado-ing himself away." His use of *tornado* as a verb was a good image for Luke himself. When he went to the writing area of the classroom, he continued the star wars play that was his favorite activity in the block area. His journal was a stage for physical action, his body never still as he drew pictures of space and monster conflicts accompanied by appropriate noisemaking. Print got into his journal only as letters on spaceships or superheroes' T-shirts or when his teacher took dictation. When his teacher encouraged him to listen to the sounds of the words he wanted to write, Luke would fidget, rub his eyes, and physically edge away from her. But in self-initiated play he revealed greater knowledge of letters and sounds. When the class made B rolls for snack one day, he said his roll was a *3* and then an *I* as he changed its shape by eating it. Another day he wrote IMD inside the mouth of his drawn character to show him saying, "I am mad."

In contrast to Luke, Jane almost disappeared in the classroom. She watched quietly, followed her teacher's instructions promptly, and in the absence of direct instruction, followed the lead of other children. In the writing area Jane drew what other children were drawing, methodically adding layers of design and writing only what she knew how to spell conventionally, like her name and "I love you." When her teacher encouraged her to write the sounds she heard, Jane paused before and after each letter she wrote, looking up as if expecting assistance and confirmation. Despite her reticence, her spellings showed considerable knowledge of letters and sounds, such as OTSPAS for "outer space." She was equally reluctant to read words she wasn't sure of, yet her 'guesses' were almost always right. But Jane loved being read to and usually sat right next to her teacher, where she could study the pictures and comment quietly on the story.

This is a book about learning to read and write. But, more than that, it is a book about the role of literacy in children's lives, based on

close-up, long-term observations of children like Luke and Jane. These observations raised questions about more than the mechanics of literacy learning, questions which I attempt to address in this book by considering what literacy means to children. For it is clear that to understand Luke's and Jane's literacy learning requires more than assessing their knowledge of the alphabet or their familiarity with books. Even the briefest sketches of their approaches to literacy at the beginning of kindergarten suggest that what they knew about literacy included a sense of themselves and others as participants in particular transactions involving written language. And what they did as readers and writers was to act upon these self-definitions and social relations. This book explores these personal and social meanings of literacy for children.

Of particular concern are the ways that children's learning was connected to family and school definitions of literacy in relation to gender and work. Our understanding of patterns such as Luke's apparent resistance to literacy, and Jane's anxiety about it, can be greatly enriched by considering those patterns in light of family and classroom dynamics around gender and work. In my discussion of these matters, I attempt to show that the choices children make every day about literacy have deeper personal and social significance than we usually imagine. For in their choices, children are defining who they are and who they are becoming.

CURRENT THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BEGINNING LITERACY

Probably no subject has been more discussed and researched in the field of education than beginning literacy. The question of what is involved in the learning and teaching of reading, and more recently writing, has engaged the attention of numerous scholars, and answers to the question have become increasingly complex and specific. Underlying the question is often an interest in explaining disparities in the literacy achievement of individuals or groups—"why Johnny can't read (and write)"—and in finding ways to overcome barriers to achievement. Definitions of achievement and the barriers to it have varied greatly, depending on the initial assumptions of researchers about the nature of literacy and learning.

In this book I argue that research and discussion of beginning literacy have overlooked important dimensions of learning because of faulty assumptions. I argue my case primarily by describing the literacy learning of a small group of children in and out of school, with

their families, their teachers, and their peers. In describing their beginning literacy, I discuss my assumptions and how these assumptions lead me to see their literacy learning in new ways, ways that are broader than our current theories. However, it is useful to begin with a brief discussion of current major theories of beginning literacy.

In this section I describe the assumptions of the two prevailing perspectives in research on beginning literacy—emergent literacy and the social construction of literacy. In the section that follows, I locate my approach within a third perspective that has so far had little influence on the study of beginning literacy. My characterization of these three perspectives is intentionally broad in order to highlight key points of difference and to provide a heuristic framework for examining a wide range of studies of beginning literacy which examine complex and subtle issues. I cite specific studies as examples of work within each perspective with some discomfort because the assignment to such broad categories necessarily misrepresents and oversimplifies the thinking of researchers and scholars. Yet the strong framing of perspectives as sharing basic assumptions about the nature of literacy and learning reveals gaps in our research and understanding about learning to read and write.

Emergent Literacy

Much of the currently influential research on beginning literacy comes from a perspective that is generally labeled 'emergent literacy' (e.g., Mason & Allen, 1986; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; term attributed to Clay, 1966). The assumptions of this perspective about literacy and learning are largely those of cognitive/developmental psychology and developmental psycholinguistics. Literacy is regarded as a body of cognitive knowledge about written language and a set of processes for using that knowledge; learning is seen as the gradual development over time of that knowledge and those processes on the basis of biologically given properties of the mind and exposure to and interaction with written language. On the basis of these assumptions, research from this perspective seeks to identify the knowledge and processes that individuals possess, the order in which they are acquired, and the environmental conditions which best support their acquisition.

The emergent literacy perspective has largely replaced an earlier perspective which emphasized the child's 'readiness' for beginning reading instruction in first grade. The readiness perspective sought to identify the knowledge and skills children needed to benefit from conventional modes of reading instruction and defined literacy learn-

ing as the child's response to literacy instruction. The emergent literacy perspective shifted the focus from teaching to learning and defined literacy learning as beginning long before formal reading instruction. As a result of this shift of focus, the emergent literacy perspective challenged many conventional teaching practices of the time. It also brought linguistic sophistication to the analysis of children's growing knowledge about written language, as well as increased attention to beginning writing.

Yet both emergent literacy and reading readiness perspectives share the assumptions that literacy is a cognitive commodity possessed by individuals to greater or lesser degrees and that the achievement of literacy may be measured along a single continuum oriented toward school standards. Disparities in the amount of literacy possessed by individuals or groups are generally attributed to deficits in cognitive processing or to differences in exposure to and interaction with written language. The former interpretation leads to strategies for remediation, the latter to suggestions for creating environments which support exposure to and interaction with written language in particular ways. The controlling vision is that literacy learning will proceed smoothly when a fully endowed child has sufficient supportive interaction with written language.

The Social Construction of Literacy

A second influential body of research on beginning literacy might be characterized as the 'social construction of literacy' perspective (e.g., Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983). This perspective draws its basic assumptions about literacy and learning from cultural anthropology and sociolinguistics. Literacy is defined as a community's ways of using written language to serve social purposes, and learning is seen as the process of adopting community practices for using and interpreting written language through participation in its social life. Studies of beginning literacy from this perspective examine the functions served by written language within particular cultures and the patterns of social interaction through which children come to adopt cultural practices.

From this perspective the definition of literacy is community specific, and children almost invariably achieve it in that they adopt their home community's practices for using and interpreting written language. Schools and classrooms are studied as separate cultures or subcultures with their own literacy practices and rules for participation. School-based definitions of literacy and standards of achievement

are regarded as only some among many possible ways of using written language, although the school's ways may generally be perceived as the means to success in the larger society.

Within the social construction of literacy perspective, disparities in school literacy achievement are almost always considered in relation to groups rather than individuals. Mismatches between the school's ways of teaching and evaluating literacy and the child's community-based ways of learning and using written language are viewed as limiting the child's access to full participation in school, and ultimately the larger society. Proposed solutions to such mismatches involve accommodation on one or both sides to the differences between them. The family or community may prepare children for school by taking on the ways of the dominant culture, or the school may expand its ways to include those of the child's community. The controlling vision of the social construction perspective is that literacy learning will proceed smoothly when there is a good fit between the community's and the school's ways of using written language and of socializing children to those uses.

These two perspectives—emergent literacy and the social construction of literacy—are not totally distinct. A number of studies merge the two perspectives in examining beginning literacy, adopting the assumptions of both to some degree and seeking to explain the interaction of social and cognitive factors in literacy learning. The emergent literacy perspective already incorporates a notion of social context in its focus on environments that support literacy development. In adopting the assumption of cultural variation in ways of using written language, some studies (e.g., Clay, 1971; McCormick & Mason, 1984; Snow, 1983) examine how different cultural practices facilitate or inhibit children's acquisition of knowledge about written language. Such studies usually maintain the assumption of a single ideal developmental continuum and thus deny the assumption that communities' varying literacy practices are socially functional and reflect different definitions of literacy. Other studies (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1984; Heath, 1986; Michaels, 1986) embed the development of cognition within the social construction perspective, examining how different community practices with language lead to different patterns of cognitive knowledge about written language. These studies generally retain the assumption of shared community definitions of literacy and disavow the assumption of a single developmental continuum. Thus individuals are expected to follow the patterns of development in their home cultures; individual variability, if considered at all, is treated as a matter of participating in more than one culture.

Several researchers (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Teale, 1986) have challenged the assumption of cultural homogeneity in literacy practices, at least when communities are broadly defined by class, race, or ethnicity. They report that family literacy practices differ widely within social groups and locate the family as the primary site of the social construction of literacy for children. The result of dealing with cultural heterogeneity by focusing on families as the primary social unit, however, is often to move broader social considerations to the background. For example, some studies (Harste et al., 1984) focus solely on individual learning within the immediate social contexts of home and classroom, while others (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988) identify the role of class, race, and ethnicity as outside the family in larger patterns of economic and social injustice. Such patterns may, of course, have an impact on literacy learning when they prohibit families from acquiring literacy materials (Teale, 1986) or when they result in the misjudgment of students' capabilities and their marginalization in school (Gilmore, 1986; Trueba, 1988).

LITERACY AS SOCIAL STATUS AND IDENTITY

A third perspective on beginning literacy might be characterized as 'literacy as social status and identity.' This perspective shares basic assumptions about literacy and learning with the social construction of literacy perspective, but it locates the study of particular social groups within a larger social and political context. It examines the learning and teaching of literacy as part of status and dominance relations in the larger society, and has been particularly concerned with a sociopolitical analysis of disparities in literacy achievement. For its theoretical base, the literacy as social status and identity perspective draws on feminist theory and approaches called 'critical theory' that have developed within many disciplines of the social sciences and humanities. Both feminist and critical theories are concerned with the ways in which hierarchical relationships among groups in society are sustained and changed over time; that is, what are the everyday social practices by which dominant groups maintain or lose status and power.

Within the literacy as social status and identity perspective, literacy is defined as an orientation toward the knowledge and use of written language that positions individuals and groups within hierarchies of social relations. Literacy learning is the negotiation of one's orientation toward written language and thus one's position within multiple relations of power and status. A number of studies have

broadly articulated critical theory and feminist perspectives in relation to school achievement in general (e.g., Anyon, 1984; Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, & Dowsett, 1982; Ogbu, 1987; Willis, 1977) and literacy in particular (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Gilbert, 1989a; Giroux, 1983; Sola & Bennett, 1985). Few studies have directly examined beginning literacy from this perspective (Friere & Macedo, 1988, have done so for adults; McDermott, 1976, and Gilbert, 1989a, come closest for young children; other works such as that of Shannon, 1988, have examined literacy instruction for young children from a critical theory perspective). In general the concern in all these works has been to identify the social practices by which schools, families, and individuals reproduce, resist, and transform hierarchies of social relations and their positions within them. Studies have described how the institutional structure and pedagogical practices of schools sort students into groups which differ in social class, race, and gender, and how those differences lead to different academic outcomes. They have also described how the meanings that families and individuals from different social groups make of their experience lead to different academic and social outcomes as well.

Unlike the emergent literacy and social construction of literacy perspectives, the literacy as social status and identity perspective assumes that disparities in school literacy achievement serve an important social function in the reproduction of dominance hierarchies. Barriers to achievement are seen as built into social structures and everyday social practices, especially for those groups which are not in positions of power. Most of the work from this perspective focuses on the school experience of minority or working class students and explains the dynamics that lead to patterns of school failure for these groups. There is a tendency to assume that social groups are homogeneous in important respects and that schools uniformly have the effect of reproducing the status quo. Under these assumptions literacy learning may be expected to proceed smoothly only for those who are members of socially dominant groups. Such assumptions, however, lead to highly deterministic analyses which offer little insight into the dynamics of change or the complexity of individuals' experience in social groups and institutions.

Within the larger body of work on schooling and social reproduction there are other approaches which assume that individuals, social groups, and social institutions are not internally consistent and homogeneous in their values and practices, nor are their outcomes mechanistically determined. Work by Connell et al. (1982), although it does not deal specifically with literacy, describes the complex dynamics within and among schools, families, and the other social institutions through which individual life histories are constructed.

This analysis of interviews and observations of ruling class and working class adolescents, and their parents and teachers, shows that multiple and often contradictory values and practices are present within families and schools and that issues of power and identity are constantly negotiated and renegotiated through social interaction. Connell and his colleagues argue that class and gender are best thought of not as categories in which people are located, but as complex patterns of relations among people, relations which "like heavily-travelled roads are constantly under construction: getting organized, divided, broken down, remade" (1982, p. 33).

Although Giroux (1983) has provided a theoretical base for the examination of literacy learning from a nonmechanistic critical perspective, there is little research which describes the full complexity of family or classroom dynamics around literacy. McDermott (1976), Sola and Bennett (1985), and Bloome (1989) offer descriptions of classroom literacy events that reveal the negotiation of power and identity issues; and Gundlach, McLane, Stott, and McNamee (1985), Varenne and McDermott (1986), and Bloome (1987) describe family interactions around literacy as involving the negotiation of power and identity issues. What these studies begin to suggest is that questions about the learning and teaching of literacy and about disparities in the achievement of literacy cannot be addressed without taking into account that each and every literacy transaction is a moment of self-definition in which people take action within and upon their relations with other people. From this perspective literacy learning would rarely be expected to proceed smoothly or without tension.

The major argument of this book is that the study of beginning literacy in families and in schools must start with the assumption that literacy learning is such a self-defining social act. Adopting this assumption requires that we view children as acting within and upon larger social systems. We tend to associate childhood with innocence, future potential, or even victimization in relation to those systems, but not with agency and choice. This book begins with the belief expressed by Connell et al. (1982, pp. 77–78; emphasis in original):

> Formative choices in early life may be inarticulate and ill-understood but they are made nonetheless—and that making is what constructs us as individual persons. Ian is, at some very basic level, choosing not to become quite like John [his father]. We can never 'explain' those choices in the sense of predicting them; but we can sometimes understand them and sympathize with them, and we can certainly follow their consequences.
>
> In this research we have tried to see people's lives as projects rather than as predetermined fates and to see people as active constructors of

> what they have become and are becoming. There is no inconsistency in recognizing that the project may be launched, and the choices made, under terrible constraints. And we have tried to spell some of these out in our discussions of class and gender.
>
> Yet there is a danger in *this* sort of formula that social structures will seem to be inhuman and external forces contrasted with a really human realm of individual choice. Our image of person and society becomes that of a flea freely hopping around inside a cage and, though that may produce fine dramas about fleas, it isn't very helpful if our concern is to do something about the cage. A resolution of the problem, as Sartre among others came to see, can only lie in the direction of a theory of practice: for the 'cage' is composed of what people do.... It is only by examining personal choice and motive in the context of social relations which enter into them at the most basic level, which are constitutive of individual lives, that we will get any kind of grip on the processes at work.

In examining literacy, gender, and work in families and in school, I will argue that, in learning to read and write, children make choices through which they construct definitions of themselves and their relations with parents, siblings, teachers, and peers. In their choices, children, like adults, strive both to be counted as members of social groups and to be recognized as unique individuals. They seek to realize their culturally constructed intentions by acting on the material and social world; and their choices constitute, in Willis's (1977, p. 172) words, "the organization of the self in relation to the future." Even though children's choices involve local, face-to-face negotiations of identity and power, they are made within the constraints of, and have consequences for, broader social processes. For families and schools are social institutions which are shaped by larger social relations and which play a role in reproducing and transforming those social relations.

I will pay particular attention to two important areas where family and classroom dynamics intersect with relations of dominance and power in the larger society. These areas concern children's self-definitions in relations of gender and work. The evidence from this study suggests that gender and work are important issues in children's early literacy learning in families and in school. Ultimately, I will argue that common gender-based divisions of labor in families and in schools constitute an important context for children's choices regarding literacy, as do class-based family and school definitions of literacy learning as adult-regulated work or child-regulated play.[1] No single factor, nor combination of factors, *determines* children's choices, however. For one thing, families and classrooms are not internally consistent in their definitions; they are better characterized as sites where

multiple, sometimes contradictory definitions are negotiated and managed. Moreover, children's choices involve such negotiation and management of multiple, contradictory definitions as well. Detailed portraits of children like Luke and Jane highlight the diversity among seemingly similar families and the individuality of children's experience and action.

Although children may not be assigned to social categories that determine their literacy behavior, the evidence from my study also shows consistent patterns over time in the choices of individual children. These patterns, I argue, have their roots in family dynamics around literacy in which children establish an orientation toward literacy, a way of defining themselves in relation to other people in literacy events.[2] Like all self-definitions, orientations toward literacy are powerful and relatively stable because people seek continuity and coherence in their lives. The vignettes of Luke and Jane which began this chapter were moments in a continuous history, reflecting back to the children's earlier literacy transactions in their families but also projecting forward over their first 3 years in school.

What children bring into the classroom is an orientation toward literacy constructed in their families, which includes a sense of themselves within a set of expectations about the social relations involved in reading and writing in different settings. Among these expectations are those regarding 'school literacy'—that is, how social relations around literacy are constructed in school. Teachers, like parents, have more power than children to regulate social relations in the classroom, but students interpret and respond to classroom literacy events in ways consistent with their own orientations. The evidence from this study suggests that changes in students' orientations toward literacy do not happen quickly or easily and are more aptly described as adaptations to a new set of social relations than as reconstructions of their self-definitions.

Multiple sources of tension are inherent in this vision of literacy learning as people strive to construct self-definitions and relations with others in the face of class and gender-related definitions of literacy. The data from this study show that literacy learning was seldom an easy journey, even when the children were well endowed cognitively and socially and there was a good match between community and classroom practices with written language. Tensions—like those experienced by Luke and Jane—often resulted from the efforts of children, families, and teachers to negotiate and manage conflicting definitions of literacy. These tensions, and their hypothesized sources, are the primary subject of this book; they were not, however, where the study began—as I describe in the next section.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Although the discussion of beginning literacy in this book reflects and develops the assumptions and arguments outlined above, the study on which the book is based began within the framework of emergent literacy and social construction perspectives. A description of the design of the study is, therefore, in part, the story of the interaction between ongoing decisions about research methods and data analysis and the evolution of a new framework. That story begins with my decision to use ethnographic research methods to learn about literacy from children.

Having come to my interest in young children's reading and writing through the study of their oral language development, I wanted to see how children constructed knowledge of written language in classrooms which provided a supportive social context for literacy learning. I had previously used experimental and quasi-experimental methods to study children's comprehension of oral and written language, but I felt that such approaches gave me a very narrow view of children's language. The methodology and assumptions of ethnographic research seemed better suited to the kind of broad, socially situated view I was looking for. More important, ethnographic approaches were oriented toward viewing literacy from the perspective of the learner. As much as possible, I wanted to understand what literacy learning meant to children. The construction of individual learning biographies on the basis of ethnographic data seemed ideal for achieving this 'insider's view.'

The selection of classroom sites for the study was important to my goal, because I believed that many classrooms severely limited children's potential avenues for learning. I was interested in classrooms where instruction was based on what is known about children's learning, not on the curriculum traditions that underlie much literacy instruction. I also wanted to expand my own observations and interpretations by collaborating with teachers who were keen observers of children. At the time Susan Benedict and Jim Sullivan were teaching kindergarten and first grade in the same public elementary school. Both had studied language development and process-oriented reading and writing instruction in graduate courses at the university where I taught, and I had spent enough time in their classrooms to know that they were places where children's literacy seemed to be thriving. The beliefs we shared about children's language learning are described in Chapter 3 as the theoretical base for literacy instruction in their classrooms, but these beliefs also provided an important shared intellectual base for a research project. From the moment they agreed

to join me in collaborative research, we worked as a team to define the focus of the study and to develop research procedures.

Our general plan was to document the literacy learning of a group of children from the beginning of kindergarten through the end of first grade. The opportunity to extend the study another year arose when Susan Benedict's teaching assignment was later shifted from kindergarten to second grade. We began by inviting the participation of all the children assigned to one of the half-day kindergarten classes. Although the classroom would be the primary research site, it seemed important to understand what knowledge of literacy the children were bringing into the classroom with them. To learn something about children's family and preschool literacy activities, I conducted home visits with the nine children whose families were contacted before school began. The home visits were followed by interviews with parents from these families; parent interviews were also conducted with the other six participating families who were contacted when school began. The nature of these visits and interviews is described in Chapter 2. Subsequent contact with parents consisted of a questionnaire about children's home literacy activities in the middle of the kindergarten year and interviews with parents at the end of the kindergarten and first-grade years. The children themselves were interviewed at home during the summer following second grade.

Following the 'funnel' design of ethnographic research, we kept the scope of our classroom observations broad for the first 6 weeks of the study and followed all the children as closely as possible. We were interested in, not just the children's knowledge and strategies in reading and writing, but their literacy-related motiviations and self-perceptions as well—the 'why' behind the 'what' and 'how' of their reading and writing. I was present as a participant observer for two half-day sessions a week until February and once a week thereafter. In addition, I met weekly with Susan Benedict and her aide Marilyn Gundersheim to discuss our observations of the children.

At the end of 6 weeks, we faced our first decision about narrowing the focus of the study. The need for focus was apparent to us since it was impossible to observe 16 children simultaneously.[4] We considered narrowing our focus by identifying specific aspects of reading and writing for study or by selecting a small number of children to follow in depth; but neither alternative was consistent with what we had seen already about the individual and highly integrated dynamic of literacy learning. Focusing on specific aspects of reading and writing would reduce the complexity of data collection, but it would also reduce our capacity to make sense of children's learning; and we were reluctant to select a smaller number of children, because they could not in any sense represent the rest.

Our solution was to make the collection of comprehensive data manageable for all the children by devising a rotating schedule which focused our observation on groups of four children for a week at a time. Summary statements about our observations of each child during a particular cycle became the base for our observations of that child in the next cycle as we looked for changes over time. We followed this practice for the 3 years of the study, even when the number of children was reduced to eight in the first-grade year due to the assignment of half the children to another first grade class, and to six in the second grade year by our own selection. As the children's literacy became more expansive and complex, our rotating cycle of observations allowed us to focus closely on two children a week. I continued to observe 1 day a week during reading and writing instruction and to meet with the classroom teacher(s) weekly for discussion.

Over the 3 years of the study the configuration of the research team varied as we were joined by various student researchers. Individual members of the team defined their own modes of participation in the study, depending on their personal interests and time constraints. Several types of data other than fieldnotes were collected by various members of the team; these are identified in the Appendix, which also describes the analysis of data in more detail. At the end of each school year, the data were compiled and reviewed by several team members in relation to the summary statements we had made throughout the year about children's literacy learning. We made a special effort to look for counterevidence to our previous descriptions; and as a result of our discussions, we retained, modified, or discarded our original statements. In this way we constructed the framework for the learning biographies in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7.

The decision to collect a broad range of literacy-related data for as many children as possible contributed significantly to the ultimate shift from emergent literacy and social construction of literacy perspectives to the literacy as social status and identity perspective. It meant that we continued to record and interpret data that caused us to question the assumptions of our original perspectives. The emergent literacy perspective had grounded the study in individualistic models of learning that directed our attention to cognitive phenomena. By casting our data collection net broadly to address children's motivations and self-perceptions, however, we found ourselves also attending to social and affective phenomena and arriving at visions that incorporated them.

These visions were more than just broadly inclusive of different kinds of literacy-related phenomena; they seemed to show instead that the different kinds of phenomena were integrated and that what we were calling motivation and self-perception were central to this

integration. It was the purposes for which children used literacy and the ways they defined themselves in relation to literacy that gave unity and coherence to their learning biographies. The social construction of literacy perspective gave us a framework for understanding literacy as a social and cultural activity, and particular theories of learning such as those of Vygotsky (1978) and Harste et al., (1984) provided models of the inseparability of children's social and cognitive worlds. Yet neither offered a satisfying framework for interpreting the consistent patterns we saw in the ways individual children participated in literacy events. These individual patterns, rather than the different kinds of commonalities assumed by the emergent literacy and social construction of literacy perspectives, were what I wanted to describe and interpret when the data collection was completed at the end of the children's second grade year and the members of the research team chose to pursue their own interests within the data or left the project to attend to other professional interests.

It was the pursuit of a salient and disconcerting phenomenon in the children's learning biographies that eventually led to the adoption of the literacy as social status and identity perspective. This phenomenon was the tensions that were often apparent in children's participation in classroom literacy events, tensions that were surprising because they were not predictable from the emergent literacy or social construction of literacy perspectives. The tensions were apparent even when children like Luke and Jane showed strong cognitive capabilities, came from families that provided supportive literacy environments, and experienced a considerable measure of cultural continuity between home and school. The tensions appeared to be a product of the ways children defined themselves in relation to literacy; the desire to explore the sources of those definitions guided my further analysis of the data.

Examination of the family data from this study and of the psychological literature on children's development of identity in families (Bank & Kahn, 1982; Kegan, 1982; Winnicott, 1971) converged on the two dominant themes of this book—gender and work—as central to the children's definitions of themselves in relation to literacy. But while the psychoanalytic tradition addressed core issues in how children make sense of themselves and their family relationships, it failed to consider the broader social and cultural context of family life. Locating the family in this broader context seemed crucial to avoid a sense of voyeurism and of "blaming the victims" in interpreting family dynamics. Moreover, issues related to gender and work clearly involved the intersection of family matters and broader social processes.

A number of works on the social construction of gender and work

offered frameworks for looking at family dynamics as part of the process of reproducing, and potentially transforming, gender and class relations in society (Chodorow, 1978; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1984; Leonard, 1984; Sullivan, 1984; Willis, 1977). These works integrated the psychological and the social by considering the family as a place where individuals learn the meanings, values, and self-perceptions that are psychologically adapted to particular positions in social relations. It is within families that children first encounter and negotiate the multiple and often contradictory meanings of gender and work. Feminist and critical theory perspectives on schooling suggested that this negotiation of multiple and contradictory meanings continues in the classroom as well (Connell et al., 1982; Walkerdine, 1985; Willis, 1977). Together these various approaches provided a framework for interpreting the tensions children experienced in defining themselves in relation to literacy in families and in school.

Thus, in ways that could not be foreseen, the original choice of research methodology and subsequent decisions about data collection and analysis contributed to a shift to the literacy as social status and identity perspective. These choices were also personally grounded in my intellectual and ethical intentions, however. My interest as a researcher was to work toward an understanding of literacy that would expand the opportunities for all children to use their capacities more fully and to determine to what ends their individual and collective capacities are used. That is why I chose from the beginning to work in classrooms where I believed children's capability and agency were respected and nurtured. And I suspect that is why I chose to pursue in the analysis what was unexpected in the data—the tensions children experienced around literacy, and the connection of those tensions to larger social issues. Focusing on the tensions entails the risk that I will be misunderstood. My intention is not to fault the children, the parents, or the teachers, but to work toward an understanding of learning that will expand the opportunities for all of us—as researchers, teachers, parents, and community members—to use our capacities more fully and to determine to what ends our individual and collective capacities are used.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The interpretations and arguments I have outlined in this chapter are developed by following the children's literacy learning chronologically from the beginning of kindergarten to the end of second grade. I have

chosen throughout the book to present detailed learning biographies of individual children, because such biographies best represent the complexity and individuality of literacy learning. They provide evidence against mechanistic models of social processes because they reveal the way that constructs of gender and work are interpreted and negotiated by children in everyday literacy transactions.

The biographies are rich in specifics about the children's reading and writing, moreso than needed to make a case for the importance of gender and work in children's definitions of themselves as readers and writers. My goal in presenting detailed biographies is not to make the strongest case for a single interpretation, but rather to capture as much of the lived reality and full complexity of literacy learning as possible. Readers who presently hold other perspectives on beginning literacy will recognize familiar ground here and may bring interpretations that further extend the usefulness of the analysis and build toward a comprehensive integration of cognitive, cultural, social, and political aspects of literacy learning.

In a sense, then, the book consists of two different kinds of interpretation, the narrative interpretation in the learning biographies and the focused analytical interpretation in the discussion of the biographies. To preserve and signal the integrity of both forms of interpretation, I have distinguished the learning biographies from the analytical discussion by setting them in different typefaces. In keeping with the narrative form of the biographies, I have not interrupted the text with the scholarly apparatus of citations and have used footnotes sparingly for methodological comments and references to other studies. I have followed the familiar conventions of scholarship in the discursive sections of the text: the literature reviews that introduce each chapter, and the interpretive discussions which link the dynamics of literacy learning to relations of gender and work.

Chapter 2 focuses on the dynamics of literacy learning in families and introduces four of the children and their families as I first met them—in their homes before the children began kindergarten. The descriptions of children's family literacy show how literacy learning was grounded in family relations and how, acting within and upon these relations, children constructed their own orientations toward literacy and ways of dealing with related gender and work issues. This chapter makes the argument that in their internal relations families mediate broader social relations of gender and work and that the common division of domestic labor, in which mothers assume primary responsibility for children's literacy, plays a significant role in the gender dynamics of literacy learning. Thus even before they enter school, children construct orientations toward literacy which position them in social relations of status and dominance.

Chapter 3 focuses on the pedagogical context of children's literacy learning and describes the approach to literacy instruction in the kindergarten classroom and its theoretical base in emergent literacy and social construction of literacy perspectives. A discussion of the intersection of pedagogy with relations of social class locates the classroom in relation to the literacy as social status and identity perspective and identifies sources of tension between family expectations about school literacy and the teachers' approach to instruction. These sources of tension were present despite a great deal of continuity between family child-rearing practices and pedagogical practices in the classroom, due to the location of both within status and dominance relations in the larger society. Thus in entering the classroom, children encountered a pedagogical orientation toward literacy that positioned them in relations outside the classroom as well.

Chapter 4 considers the individuality of children's literacy learning in the classroom in relation to the learning biographies of two of the children introduced in Chapter 2. Individual patterns in the children's literacy learning are identified and interpreted as grounded in their definitions of themselves in relation to others in literacy transactions. These self-definitions involve the children's continuing negotiation of gender and work issues in the classroom as they construct a new set of social relations with teachers and peers. The comparison of the two learning biographies shows that children's responses to their teachers' pedagogical approach are based on the orientations toward literacy they had constructed at home, and that contradictions between pedagogical approaches and children's orientations are a source of tension in children's literacy learning.

Chapter 5 focuses on the sources of tension in children's literacy learning by examining the learning biographies of the other two children introduced in Chapter 2. The discussion attributes tensions in the children's literacy learning to contradictions within systems of gender and work relations as the children encountered them in family and classroom social relations, and shows how tensions were managed by both teacher and children. The chapter also considers sources of tension for the teacher in her pedagogical choices as they related to gender and work issues, and shows how her ways of mangaging the tensions entered into the dynamics of children's literacy learning. In managing what they interpreted as personal and interpersonal conflicts, both teachers and children were also constructing and reconstructing their positions in systems of gender and class relations.

Chapter 6 draws from the family data and kindergarten learning biographies of nine additional children to consider how structuring processes related to gender and work operate in the dynamics of

individual literacy learning. The comparison of all 13 children identifies patterns and contradictions related to gender and work in literacy learning and shows that family dynamics around literacy involved a highly specific interaction of many factors, including the mother's predominant role in supporting literacy, the participation by fathers in children's literacy activities, the gender and relative age of siblings and their role in each other's literacy, and the treatment by family members of literacy learning as work or play. In each case, the children constructed their own orientations toward literacy as part of their own activity in constructing family relationships and negotiating identity issues involving gender and work. Literacy learning in the classroom involved a similar construction of relations with teachers and peers and the continuing negotiation of gender and work issues. Gender and class are thus shown not to be categories into which people are sorted, but systems of relations that are full of contradictions that must be negotiated by individuals in their everyday social lives.

Chapter 7 examines continuity and change in children's orientations toward literacy by following the four children introduced in Chapter 2 through first and second grade. The children's interaction with a male teacher in first grade, the introduction of more teacher-regulated literacy activities, and the increasing influence of peer culture are described as important aspects of social relations in the classroom. Although children's orientations toward literacy did change to various extents over the 2 years, the changes are best characterized as accommodations to new social relations rather than changes in their self-definitions and basic investments in literacy. The tensions that children experienced around and within their orientations toward literacy also showed a sometimes stubborn persistence. These patterns indicate that, even under what would certainly be considered highly favorable circumstances, there were tensions in children's literacy learning that had their sources in contradictions within larger systems of social relations. Thus even for young children, there is no politically neutral ground for literacy learning.

Chapter 8 offers some final reflections on the issues of literacy, gender, and work in families and in school and argues for theoretical perspectives that allow fuller and more complex understandings of beginning literacy and its meaning in children's lives.

ENDNOTES

[1] This is the only aspect of class relations considered specifically in this book. There may well be other aspects of class relations that enter into the dynamics of literacy learning, but orientations toward work and their connections to childrearing and

pedagogical practices have been discussed (Chodorow, 1978; Bernstein, 1975) as significant processes through which class relations are reproduced.

[2] Scollon and Scollon (1981) use the term 'orientation to literacy' in a somewhat different sense than this. Their concern is to characterize the difference between approaches to literacy in Athabaskan and Euro-Canadanian cultures, and they define 'orientation to literacy' as culturally typical ways of knowing and using written language. They are thus more interested in children's literacy learning as part of their socialization into a culture than as part of negotiating social relations within that culture. Overall, their work is most appropriately located within the social construction of literacy perspective.

[3] For introductory treatments of ethnography, see Agar (1980), Spradley (1980), and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983).

[4] The discrepancy between the number of families (15) and the number of children (16) is accounted for by the presence of a set of twins in the population.

[5] Another note about the text is appropriate here, given the concern of the book with status and dominance relations. Throughout the text I have identified members of the research team by name rather than just by status (such as research assistant) because our relations as members of the research team were not hierarchically defined. However, I have also included status designations because our different positions surely entered into our relations with each other and with the children in ways that affected data collection and analysis. Marilyn Gundersheim is referred to as a teacher throughout the text because that describes her status in the classroom better than does her official title of aide. After long deliberation, I chose in the learning biographies to refer to the teachers by the titles the children used (Mr., Mrs., Miss), because these titles were part of the social relations of the classroom. The outside researchers were all introduced to children by first names as a way of signaling that we had less authority than teachers or other adults in the classroom.

chapter 2
The Roots of Literacy Learning in Families

This chapter introduces four of the children and their families as I first met them—in their homes before the children began kindergarten. I describe these interviews in some detail to show that family literacy practices and children's knowledge of the forms and uses of written language were integrally connected to the negotiation of relations within the family and the mediation of social systems outside the family. Although researchers of beginning literacy have become increasingly concerned with what children learn about literacy at home before school, their research has focused primarily on the literacy knowledge and practices that children bring into the classroom from home as a base for instruction. Little attention has been given to the immediate relational dynamics of literacy in families or to how these dynamics are connected to relations of status and dominance in the larger society. An overview of the research on family literacy establishes the background for the analysis of family literacy in this chapter.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILY LITERACY

Recent research on beginning literacy has dealt with families in ways consistent with the theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter 1. Because of its cognitive-developmental framework, the emergent literacy perspective brought literacy research into the home as the site of early literacy learning. However, the focus of the emergent literacy perspective has remained largely on the individual child and patterns in his or her development of literacy knowledge (e.g., Baghban, 1984; Bissex, 1980; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Y. M. Goodman, 1986). When the family has been included, researchers have generally sought to

identify family practices that contribute to children's success in literacy tasks valued by the school. Factors such as reading aloud to young children, the presence of books and print in the home, and parental beliefs and practices supporting school achievement have been examined for their relationship to early literacy learning (e.g., Chall & Snow 1982; C. Chomsky, 1972; McCormick & Mason, 1984; Teale, 1984; Thorndike, 1976; Wells, 1985). This research usually does not focus broadly on family practices related to literacy, but rather identifies specific practices believed to support school literacy; and families are described as supporting literacy when they adopt the practices associated with school success.

Studies from the social construction of literacy perspective have taken a broader view of family literacy and have begun to document the diverse literacy practices of families from different social groups. In general this work treats families as representative of their community's literacy practices and as agents for socializing children into those practices (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1984; Heath, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Taylor, 1983). Thus these studies examine patterns of social interaction involving literacy in families and show how practices like reading to children may have different forms and meanings in different social groups (e.g., Heath, 1983). This research often directly addresses the degree of match or mismatch between the family's literacy practices and those of the school, with the implication that the school should respect and build upon family literacy practices.

Relatively little research on families has considered how literacy practices are embedded in the complex psychological and social dynamics of the family as an institution within the larger society. Gundlach et al. (1985) present case studies showing how young children's literacy learning in families is connected to important issues in the psychodynamics of family relationships; and studies by Bloome (1987), D. E. Smith (1987), and Varenne and McDermott (1986) give insight into the ways families perceive and manage the school's literacy learning agendas for their children and the resulting impact on family relations. An important characteristic of these latter studies is their examination of the particularity of specific families interpreting and acting within parameters of culture, class, and gender.

In this chapter I offer a similar vision of the particularity of literacy learning in families, focusing on the ways that children's literacy was part of family interactions through which family members defined themselves and their relations with each other. These acts of mutually defining self and others may be local to the family, but they are also located within the dynamics of the larger society through which relations of culture, class, and gender are defined. Thus my immediate

goal in examining the family data is to describe the particular ways in which families and children negotiated social relations and identities in their literacy practices. My larger goal is to locate those negotiations within the dynamics of culture, class, and gender as they relate to notions of literacy as particular kinds of work done by men or women, boys or girls.

In particular, the data show (a) that family literacy practices were grounded in definitions of literacy learning as work or play and of the support of literacy learning as primarily women's work, and (b) that literacy learning was embedded within the dynamics of family relations and children's construction of identity in relation to gender and work. In considering the family literacy learning of Luke, Jack, Beatrix, and Jane, I argue that the choices children made about how to participate in family literacy events were also choices about who they were as individuals and as family members, and that their choices constituted an orientation toward literacy that they brought into the classroom and the larger society. I begin with a narrative of my visit with Luke and my later interview with his mother, followed by a discussion of psychological and feminist critical theory perspectives on gender and work as issues in the construction of identity. These perspectives provide a framework for the analysis of Luke's literacy learning as embedded in family relations involving gender and work. My visits and interviews with Jack, Beatrix, Jane, and their families are then presented and analyzed within this framework.

LUKE

It was a warm August evening, the sun still strong as I turned onto a street of split-level ranch houses. The Apple Hill neighborhood offered moderately priced homes on quiet streets, considered ideal for raising children as first houses for upwardly mobile professionals but within the means of those with less mobile middle-class careers. Children were gathering in the unbroken expanse of front yards, released from family dinner tables for a few last hours of outdoor play. I pulled up to the house where I was to meet 5-year-old Luke. I felt as nervous as I imagined he would feel 2 weeks later when he got off the school bus for the first time to begin kindergarten.

I had introduced myself to Luke's mother at a meeting of parents where I had explained that I would be collaborating with Luke's teachers in a study of children's development of reading and writing in kindergarten. I invited her and Luke to participate in the study, which would begin with a visit to Luke at home. This was my first opportunity to try out my ideas for talking with children about reading and writing. With my bag of children's books and a variety of paper and writing implements, I knocked on the door and was greeted by Luke, his mother, and one of his two older sisters.

Luke was a small, wiry jack-in-the-box, responsive to the social demand for polite behavior but ready to pop into action at any opening. He took me to the downstairs playroom, with his sister following behind us. I asked Luke what he liked to play with, and we sat together on the floor as he showed me his Star Wars toys, naming the characters and demonstrating their movable parts. I noticed a Star Wars comic book on the floor and asked Luke about it. He responded by showing me his favorite part and naming the characters. His sister, who had been observing with a proprietary curiosity, announced that Luke couldn't read. He darted off to get another book to show me, a Star Wars activity book in which he had completed mazes and dot-to-dot pictures.

When I asked Luke if he also had paper and pencils for writing, he said, "Yes, ABCs." From the materials I offered out of my bag, he selected unlined paper and a pencil to do some writing for me. He printed his name in the upper left corner and began writing the alphabet in upper-case letters down the left side of the paper, naming the letters as he wrote them and commenting on their increasing size. He stopped at *G* and did not respond when I asked if he could write anything else. Questions about other people's writing also drew little response.

I took a sheet of paper myself and told Luke he could tell me what to write. I had guessed that children might demonstrate knowledge of different types of written language when dictating than when transcribing. Luke asked me to write my name, pointing to the upper left corner. I asked him what else to write and he pointed to the Star Wars title on the comic book. After writing it, I asked him if I had done it right. He asked what the title said and what my writing said. When both answers were the same, he said I had done it right. Even though Luke's copying strategy suggested a purely visual orientation to print, his evaluation of accuracy depended on the message. He pointed to two comic book captions for me to write, asked what they said, then announced that he would draw a picture for me. In left-to-right sequence he drew a tree, a person, raindrops, and a house, naming each as he drew it. I offered to write whatever he wanted to tell me about his picture, and he said, "The apples. The person wanted a apple, and then it rained, so we couldn't get a apple. Then he went in his house and he went upstairs and looked out the window. And that's all." In dictating language to be written about his drawing, Luke moved away from labels and captions into a narrative mode. This was the first of many instances where children taught me the important relationship between drawing and writing for them.

When I asked Luke if he had any books, he said yes and scooted off to get his favorite. He came back with a double page from a Star Wars comic book, which he reported wasn't really a book, "just two pages." He found the rest of the comic book, inserted the pages, and read for me by pointing to various captions and producing sound effects like "whiz" and "ka-

boom." He turned the pages from back to front and reversed direction halfway through. It seemed to be the action in the pictures that appealed to Luke and its associated sounds that he expected to find in print.

I spread the books from my bag on the floor and told Luke I would read one to him if he would help me. His sister, still hovering over our shoulders, said she knew several of the books; Luke recognized *Clifford the Big Red Dog*[2] and *The Happy Egg*. He studied the book covers and chose *Just for You*. I asked what he thought it would be about and he said, "Hammering," pointing to a hammer in the corner of the picture on the cover. He responded to my query about where to begin by opening to the title page. "Here," he said, then looked over the page and changed his mind. "No," he said, turning the page. "Here. There's no words," he announced, but then he saw where they were and pointed. He studied the pictures as I read and sometimes commented on them before turning the pages for me. After I had finished reading, he searched for a picture in which the main character sat crying on the floor surrounded by broken dishes and observed, "This is a bad page." Again, even though he knew that reading required attention to the printed words, his focus was on pictures and action as he flipped through the pages of *The Happy Egg* and reported, "He came out blue."

Since my questions about other people's reading went unanswered, I introduced the topic of kindergarten by asking Luke what he thought he would do there. He listed activities he remembered from a visit in the spring—fixing snack, drawing, and playing. When I asked specifically if he would read, he said, "No, there are no books." By this time Luke was rolling impatiently on the couch, so I began to pack my bag. Suddenly he saw a friend through the window, shouted to him, and ran up the stairs and out the door, but not before telling his mother that it had been fun. I thanked her, arranged a time to interview her a few weeks later, and rehearsed mental notes as I rushed home to record my observations in fieldnotes.[3] I felt at the time that Luke had mostly eluded me. Only slowly did I come to realize—from writing, reading, and re-reading my fieldnotes as well as from continued interaction with Luke and his family—how much he had revealed himself to me.

The conditions were not ideal for my interview of Luke's mother 3 weeks later. She was not available during the day, so it was again early evening when I returned to their house, and Luke and his older sisters were all home. The same sister who had hovered over my visit with Luke sat listening curiously to my conversation with his mother, and Luke himself darted in and out of our attention. In these interviews I normally described to parents what children had done in my visits with them; this gave the parents specific behaviors to comment on and invited equally specific reports of other home literacy behaviors. Luke's presence made this approach awkward, though, so my interview with his mother took the form of more general questions and answers. Nevertheless, the picture of Luke

that emerged indicated that he had, if anything, been unusually forthcoming in his responses to written language with me.

Luke liked to draw and play games, his mother said, and also enjoyed the "workbooks" she bought for him. His make-believe play focused on, no surprise, Star Wars. But when she read to him, Luke's mother reported, "He can start out with something he's really interested in, and in just a while he will start moving around and be attracted to other activities." He wouldn't go away when the stories were his favorite kinds, though, about ghosts, monsters, or animals, especially dinosaurs. Food labels and restaurant signs he paid attention to when he found them interesting. As we talked, Luke was looking through the books from my bag, especially the Star Wars comic I had added after my visit with him; and he interrupted us to ask about an ad he found in it inviting readers to join a Star Wars club.

Luke had done some letter work in his nursery school, his mother reported, and was not yet learning to write the family's language of origin,[4] though he had watched his sister write in this different script. She had picked up writing both languages quickly, but her writing did not make Luke interested in writing. "He seems to be very active," she said. "He doesn't want to sit down and . . . [he's] not interested in this kind of activities." There was no doubt in my mind that Luke was very active, but I suspected that he was more interested in reading and writing than was indicated by his unwillingness to sit still. Before I left he showed me his comic books and his dinosaur book and asked me to read him the names of the dinosaurs.

My contact with Luke and his family at home, although brief, was the first of many lessons that families taught me about the roots of literacy. Two overarching themes emerged from these lessons. The first has been described extensively in other studies of family literacy that have focused on the embeddedness of literacy in everyday life, whatever forms that may take in different settings (Bissex, 1980; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). The only print that held Luke's attention at all was connected to the interests that engaged his mind and the activities that engaged his body. Star Wars, monsters, animals, product labels and signs drew his attention to printed materials. But for Luke, any focus on print that slowed down the pace or distracted him from the action was a derailment. If print wasn't part of the action, he left it behind.

The second theme that resonated in these home visits, and the primary focus of this chapter, was the embeddedness of children's literacy behavior in family relations. Luke was the youngest child in a family where older siblings, as well as adults, provided demonstrations of literacy and its uses. His parents were both academically employed as scientists; thus their work required high levels of literacy. My data do not reveal whether either of them enjoyed reading or

writing as entertainment, but it was apparent that Luke's mother placed a high value on the children's literacy skills. She expressed concern in this and later interviews about Luke's progress in learning to read and write, especially in comparison to his sisters. They engaged avidly in reading and writing stories, apparently for their own pleasure as well as to please adults, and were seen as excelling in literacy activities. The image of one of Luke's sisters, watching and listening as I talked to Luke and then his mother, contrasted sharply with Luke's penchant for nearly perpetual motion and his bursts of engagement and disengagement in social interaction. That Luke's sisters were perceived by his mother as potential role models for literacy is not surprising, nor is it surprising that Luke would choose a different path. Though Luke had models of literacy for both instrumental and pleasurable purposes and showed inclinations toward both himself, these motivations appeared to conflict with his ways of defining himself in relation to other family members.

A better understanding of these dynamics may be gained through a discussion of psychologists' work on the development of identity within families, and feminists' and critical theorists' work on the family's role in structuring broader relations of social status and dominance. In the next section I draw from both the psychological and feminist critical theory literature to lay the groundwork for considering gender and work issues in literacy learning.

GENDER AND WORK AS IDENTITY ISSUES

The concept of identity varies considerably in its meaning and theoretical grounding as it is used in psychoanalysis, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology. My concern here is with consistent patterns over time in the ways individual children made sense of and acted in and on the world around them—their 'personalities' or 'characters' in everyday usage—as well as their own 'self-concepts' or internal sense of coherence over time. The richest and most specific discussions of such matters are found in the literature of depth psychology, drawing largely on a psychoanalytic tradition. This work is used here to identify central themes in children's development of identity. These analyses must be considered with caution, however, because they are seldom situated within an analysis of the larger social systems which may shape the very nature of psychological development. Several recent works have outlined theoretical models which specify links between the social domain and the psychic lives of individuals, with particular attention to the ways existing systems of social relations are implicated in psychological development

(Chodorow, 1978; Giroux, 1983; Henriques et al., 1984; Sullivan, 1984). These works are used here to expand discussion of the themes drawn from the psychological literature so that their social origins and consequences may be examined more fully.

Most psychological theories of development are based on the notion that one's early intimate relationships are primary shapers of identity (Bank & Kahn, 1982, provide a useful overview of identity development). These early sources of identity are parents' projections—the images parents attribute to the child even before it is born, their interpretations of and responses to the biological differences in infants' temperaments, and their perceived need for variation within the family (that is, only one person can occupy a certain psychological space at a particular time). These projections operate largely unconsciously for parents as well as for children, with the result that, in the words of Bank and Kahn, "Each child ultimately absorbs a unique blend of what parents hate and love about themselves" (1982, p. 124). The dynamics of this process and the sources of particular outcomes are explained differently by various schools of psychology, but the general character of explanation rests on assumptions about the universality of human 'needs' or 'drives' and an inherent logic to their developmental resolution within families.

According to the standard psychological literature, young children have already achieved important foundations of selfhood by the age of 2 in recognizing and coming to terms with their physical separateness from the world and especially from their primary caretaker (Kegan, 1982, provides a synthesis of many approaches to psychological development). The ages of 5 through 7 mark another important transition in the child's developing identity. This is the time during which a true self-concept begins to emerge as children recognize that others have thoughts and feelings that are different from and independent of their own. With the growth of this recognition, children have the capacity to identify themselves as similar to or different from mother, father, and siblings. Siblings, in particular, evaluate themselves and each other against parental ideals, values, and wishes, and work out, both consciously and unconsciously, whether and how to be like or unlike each other (Bank & Kahn, 1982).

The emergence of this more conscious sense of self coincides with, and is perhaps related to, children's recognizing and coming to terms with their emotional separateness from their parents. Freud's original formulation of the Oedipal period has been criticized and revised many times over, but there is general agreement that children from 3 to 5 confront and begin to work through intense feelings about the opposite-sex parent, generally leading to identification with the same-sex parent. Whatever long-term consequences this period may have for

sexuality and interpersonal relationships, it is clearly an important time for the establishment of basic understandings of, and feelings about, gender. The child's identity from this point forward is a gendered identity. What this means in terms of specific outcomes is not simply defined or monolithic, as indicated by the conclusion of a recent review of research on sex roles that "The various components of gender-related phenomena are infuriatingly free to vary among themselves, defying those theorists who would seek a simple and sovereign concept" (Spence, Deaux, & Helmreich, 1985, p. 172). What having a gendered identity means in general is that children's images and evaluations of themselves are integrally bound to their perceptions of themselves as male or female.

As children around age 5 begin to achieve a new level of emotional separation from their families, other issues become more important to their now more conscious sense of themselves (Kegan, 1982). With a newfound and often tenuous ability to take control of their impulses, children focus on their competence in meeting the demands of socially defined roles and goal-oriented tasks that require new levels of impulse control and cooperation with others. Figuring out the rules and following (or breaking) them to reach anticipated consequences are central concerns. In labeling this period of development "the era of industry," Erikson (1963) directly suggests the emphasis on production. He describes children as seeking recognition by producing things, striving to master the skills and tasks that prepare them for adult roles as workers. Children's identity development at this point is, therefore, directly concerned with their relation to work, which, however it is specifically defined, constitutes a significant category of human action in and on the world.

Thus the psychological literature suggests that the ages of roughly 5 through 7 are marked by the child's attention to both gender and work as identity issues. Consideration of both these issues, however, calls for examination of the larger social context of development. The standard psychological paradigm characterizes the dynamics that shape identity as biologically universal and worked out specifically within the particular psychological constellation of each family. In such formulations, larger social systems are irrelevant in the construction of one's core identity. From the perspective of recent works integrating social and psychological theory, however, it is important to link family dynamics to larger social forces. Although the family constitutes the primary personal world, the site where shared meanings are constructed, it is not separate from the social relations of the larger society and the ideologies that support them (Sullivan, 1984). In fact, the family is treated by these analyses as the most important site

for reproducing or transforming broader social relations, because it is where the core psychological dispositions are constructed by which people make sense of their positions in the social world (Chodorow, 1978; Henriques et al., 1984; Sullivan, 1984). In the development of identity, parental images of their children and wishes for them, as well as their patterns of interaction with them, reflect larger ideologies and patterns of accommodation and resistance to present dominance hierarchies.

With respect to gender identity, for example, some gender differences in development have been attributed to the fact that boys must distance themselves from a primary female caretaker to form appropriate gender identification, while girls may remain close to their mothers and achieve appropriate gender identification (Chodorow, 1978). What may appear to be a biological and local phenomenon, however, is embedded in a social system in which males and females have unequal roles and status. Chodorow (1978) argues that women's responsibility for mothering is a socially constructed division of labor that reproduces itself through the dynamic outlined above, thereby sustaining unequal roles and status. In simplified form, her argument is that, when women are primary caretakers, boys develop the psychological dispositions and capacities suited for competition in the public world, and girls develop the psychological dispositions and capacities suited for nurturing children in the domestic world. These roles are not just different but unequal, by her analysis, because the dynamics associated with women's mothering also create the psychological need and justification for male dominance.

Parenting roles and parental images of and wishes for their male and female children take shape in the context of this inequality and reflect parents' ways of making sense of and living with the inequality. A full analysis of the development of gender identification requires consideration of the ways families both reproduce and potentially transform inequitable gender relations. Chodorow (1978) suggests, for example, that, if parenting were shared more equally in an emotional as well as a material sense, children's connectedness to both parents would enable them to develop their capacities and to choose activities without feeling their gender identity is threatened. The sharp division of parental roles within families means that implicit in children's development of appropriate gender identification is a whole set of tensions around relations of status and dominance.

Similarly, definitions of and attitudes toward work are embedded in the inequitable relations of social class. Distinctions between work and play, alienated and engaged work, mental and manual labor, and men's and women's work are not mere differences, but divisions that

profoundly affect life opportunities and outcomes. Ethnographic and interview-based studies of working class culture, in particular, have examined how these divisions are reproduced in both families and schools, revealing the subjective and psychological experience of social class (Everhart, 1983; Rubin, 1976; Sennett & Cobb, 1973; Willis, 1977). Willis (1977) makes a strong link between the social and the psychological, focusing on the culturally based construction of working class identity in relation to alienated work as a crucial component in the reproduction (or transformation) of class relations. Although Willis examined this dynamic among young men in their final year of school, the psychological literature suggests that the foundations of work identity are laid earlier. Willis's analysis suggests the need to consider this earlier period from the perspective of social class as well because the culture of the family and the peer group are permeated with tensions around the social division of work roles. Different child-rearing practices, as well as different school pedagogies, for example, embody notions of authority that allocate decision making in ways that are appropriate to different work relations. Not only in the larger world but in their families as well, children must come to terms with the social relations of dominance hierarchies and the ideologies that support present class relations.

Because my acquaintance with children's personal worlds in their families was brief and relatively superficial, it would be inappropriate to attempt a full analysis of the dynamics of family relations and children's construction of identity. Yet themes emerged that were so strong in individual learning biographies that it is important to identify their probable roots in children's personal worlds, not as a speculative invasion of privacy but as a speculation about the ways families and children make sense of and act within larger social systems.

Issues of gender identification, for example, appeared to create tensions for Luke in relation to literacy. As Luke's parents projected an identity for Luke, and as he himself evaluated the more fully formed identities of his older, opposite-gender siblings, it is easy to imagine that, for Luke, becoming literate in itself was a choice to identify or not identify with other family members. If Luke's father was directly engaged in literacy activities with Luke, my data did not reveal it; his mother and sisters, on the other hand, were clearly involved in, and concerned about, Luke's reading and writing. They modeled a whole set of behaviors around literacy that included quietness, relative immobility, and interest in conventionally female topics, certainly not monsters and space wars. They regarded Luke's literacy behaviors as somewhat out of bounds and certainly immature. In general Luke's

behavior suggested exaggerated differentiation from his mother and sisters, but without disengagement—a kind of puckish rebellion against their models and expectations. To the extent that literacy itself was perceived as female behavior by Luke, it evoked a similar response. So when Luke's interests and activities led him to print, they also put him in conflict with his perception of gender appropriate behavior.

Moreover, the playfulness in Luke's rebellion suggests an intersection between gender relations and work relations. Luke's mother and sisters did not regard Luke's play-based encounters with print as fully appropriate literacy behavior and sought to engage him in the activities they valued. Luke, in turn, regarded these attempts as impositions of adult goals and plans in conflict with his own. In treating this conflict as a kind of competitive game, Luke came to invest in play not only as self-selected and pleasurable activity but also as a form of mitigated resistance to adult-sponsored work, and in this case female-identified literacy.

My evidence is insufficient to pursue the analysis of family dynamics any further in this case. That is perhaps just as well, since what is of primary interest here is major themes which give insight into children's developing identities, particularly as they connect to literacy. In Luke's case, literacy learning was embedded in an interplay of tensions around gender identification, tensions that are certainly connected to ideologies in the larger society that associate literacy, or at least certain varieties of it, with femaleness. Even though males dominate within the territory of literacy (e.g. literary, legal, academic, and other hierarchies are male dominated), the territory itself is regarded as relatively female and, in at least some social groups, as impotent.[6] Moreover, the responsibility for children's literacy within families is generally assumed by females as part of mothering. Even in families where fathers work in highly literate domains (a fair characterization of 9 of the 12 fathers in this study), it is most often mothers who read to children, oversee homework, and attend parent–teacher conferences.[7] My initial contacts with 15 families left it up to them to decide who would participate in interviews with me. In four cases both parents participated; in 11 cases only the mothers participated (including three single parents); in no case did only the father participate.[8]

Luke, of course, was not responding directly to these larger ideologies but rather to how they were enacted and interpreted within his family. As the youngest child and only boy, he asserted his power and identity by resisting female models and expectations for literacy behavior. His resistance was mixed with some real attraction toward

literacy, however, as well as an apparent desire to stay connected to his mother and older sisters. He managed both this tension between his attraction and resistance to literacy and his relations with his mother and female siblings by making play of everything. An event might begin with Luke's own interest in print as part of his play, but when his mother or sisters were involved or when he became aware of his own engagement in literacy, his play became the game of resisting what he apparently perceived as adult-sponsored and female-identifed work.

The following discussions of my home visits[7] with three other children similarly attempt to ground their school behavior in their family relations and the identities they were constructing within their families and to highlight the larger social dimensions at work in these biographies. Jack, in particular, provides interesting counterpoints to Luke in relation to gender and work.

JACK

I had met several children since that first visit with Luke when I knocked on the door of Jack's house in the same Apple Hill neighborhood one August morning. I felt more confident now that I would learn interesting things about children's literacy, but I wondered just what surprises I was unprepared for from Jack. The first came immediately as Jack's mother announced that she was going to the grocery store, handed me a check for the expected deliveryperson, and departed with Jack's older brothers in the family station wagon.

It was the first time my researcher role had meant babysitting, but Jack treated me more as a special adult guest than as his caregiver. When I asked about his favorite play activity, he led me to a room where toys covered the floor, picked up a small suitcase, and said he and his brothers usually played in the TV room across the hall. There he opened the case and removed matchbox cars one at a time, lining them up neatly on the floor and counting them accurately to 38. He put them just as neatly back into the case as I got paper, markers, pens, and pencils out of my bag so Jack could do some writing. He told me he wrote the "ABCs," chose unlined paper and a pencil, and began writing the alphabet from left to right across the page. He named each letter as he wrote it, singing the alphabet song when he was unsure of what came next. He occasionally looked at the letters which were printed on the matchbox case, as if searching for the image of a particular letter. Sometimes he drew letters in the air before he wrote them to ask me to confirm their identity (I always nodded). Treating this task as a more complex counting activity, he drew on his visual and auditory memory in a variety of ways to retrieve the ordered

sequence of the alphabet; he omitted four letters, reversed the orientation of two, and orally mislabeled two.

When he finished the alphabet, I asked if he could write anything else. He said no, and I responded that I thought there was something else he could probably write. "What?" he asked. When I suggested his name, he said, "That's easy," took another sheet of paper, and printed his first name. Then he announced that he couldn't write his last name, and copied MATCHBOX from the case. When he finished, he said, "See? Matchboxes." I asked how he knew it was matchboxes, and he pointed to the pictures on the suitcase saying, "'Cause there are matchboxes on it." I asked how he had learned to write his ABCs, and he answered that he had figured it out and that his brothers had taught him.

After an interlude during which Jack gave me a brief tour of the family's home business, I offered to write whatever he told me to. He said, "Snoopy," in a tone that led me to suspect another surprise was coming. As I wrote the letter *S*, Jack objected, "Not spelling," and I registered fully his intention that I should draw. I drew a poor likeness of the Snoopy toy near us on the floor, which Jack decided was suitable for coloring. When he finished, he agreed with my suggestion to spell Snoopy's name and indicated that I should put it above the drawing. Then Jack asked if I would like to hear a record and played "Snoopy and the Red Baron" on his record player.

I decided to follow Jack's lead with the record player and asked if he had any stories on records. He said yes and put on one about Casper the Friendly Ghost. Despite an interruption to answer the telephone and a mismatch between the pages of the book and the page-turning signal on the record due to missing pages, Jack managed to keep the book synchronized with the record by following the pictures. I then tried to interest him in the books from my bag by offering to read to him, but Jack put on another record instead. About halfway through the record, though, he pointed to my Star Wars comic and said, "That one." He said it was about Star Wars; and when I asked how he knew, he pointed to the pictures of R2D2 and 3CPO on the cover. Jack's overriding attention to pictures continued as I began reading. He directed me to turn the first page before I had finished reading it and interrupted the reading of the next page to ask, "Where's Obi-Wan-Kenobi?" He searched several pages for pictures of Obi-Wan-Kenobi, then looked for Luke Skywalker. At one point he said, "That's not Star Wars, let's find Star Wars," and flipped through the rest of the pages, clearly unsatisfied with what he found. (In fact, the comic book characters included only Princess Leia and Obi-Wan-Kenobi from the film, and Jack did not recognize the drawing of Obi-Wan-Kenobi.) When the pictures did not represent the story Jack knew, he lost interest and set the book aside.

Other attempts to focus his attention on books were responded to without interest. When I asked if Jack had any books without records, he picked up one of the record books to which the record was missing and flipped pages back and forth silently to show me how he would read it. When we later encountered books on the toy room floor and I offered to read to him, he picked up a puzzle for us to do instead. His prompted memories of visiting kindergarten included no books. In the end we filled the time until his mother returned by playing with the matchbox cars, his concern for neatness and order forsaken in dramatic play.

My interview with Jack's mother several weeks later confirmed much of what Jack had shown me about his home literacy experiences. She described him in this way: "He's a liner-upper. I don't know what it is about him, he seems to have to have it exactly, you know, categories so to speak, or straight, make sure it's even....His nursery school teacher said he follows directions to the T." Jack had learned the alphabet, she said, by joining his older brothers when they did their homework together around the kitchen table after school. They would write letters for him to copy; and when everyone was finished, they were free for the active outdoor play Jack had been waiting for. When Jack participated in writing letters to family friends, his mother encouraged him to figure out spellings on his own. But Jack, she thought, wanted to have it right and used both visual and auditory strategies for remembering spellings.

Jack's mother said that the record player was not a favorite activity of his, and she indicated that I had not seen the full extent of Jack's interest in books. Reading was generally a social activity he shared with his mother and his brothers, though, as she read aloud to all of them. Jack liked to choose the book to be read and did not always choose the same ones. "He listens and he understands," she said. "He's an observer." She reported that he spent a lot of time with Richard Scarry books, focusing on the action in the pictures. He was beginning to attend to the print on road signs and T-shirt logos; he wanted to know what they said and remembered familiar ones.

Jack's home literacy experiences, like Luke's, were embedded in everyday life; but rather than being connected to his imaginative and active play, they were primarily located in what might be called "family business." Homework time and family letters required attention to print, and Jack responded by following directions and using various memory strategies to produce a neat and ordered product. Form itself was his focus. Jack's interest in stories was more content-related in the appeal of dramatic action, but was also located in family interaction. The discrepancy between his interest in reading with me and with his mother made me wonder if the family interaction wasn't more attractive to Jack than the story itself. Or perhaps his role as

host precluded the intimacy of story reading in our relationship. At any rate, Jack's attention to form and content in literacy activities was sharply divided, each embedded in different types of family interaction.

Jack's motivation in these family social events was quite different from Luke's despite certain similarities in the family literacy environment. Like Luke, Jack was the youngest child in a family where older siblings as well as parents modeled literacy behaviors. His parents, like Luke's, were engaged in occupations that required high levels of instrumental literacy, though their activities are better characterized as business than as academic. Jack was quite familiar with, and even participated in, the business they ran from their home. His father also had a primary career outside the home; his mother combined homemaking with her work for the family business. She was deeply concerned about, and actively promoted, her children's success in school. Jack's siblings, unlike Luke's, were both male, and their engagement in literacy activities appeared to be motivated by their interest in living up to adult expectations. They were accommodating and businesslike about meeting their mother's and the school's demands for reading and writing, but there was no evidence that they pursued literacy activities for their own pleasure or as part of their play. As Jack constructed an identity within his family, his concern was not how to be different from his siblings but how to be like them. In literacy, as well as in other respects, Jack emulated his brothers and measured his own competence by their standards. Since Jack could be like his brothers in family literacy activities and simultaneously please his mother, there was no conflict for him between becoming literate and achieving appropriate gender identification.

In fact, Jack's motivations for literacy appeared to be almost entirely driven by his wish to be like his brothers. And since they treated literacy as an externally directed activity, he did, too. There was a sense of solidarity rather than competition in their accomplishment of this adult-sponsored work. Each wanted to meet maternal expectations and seemed generally to do so, but there was little apparent internal engagement in these activities. Literacy was not an arena for forceful action or the expression of vital energies. The boys' orientation toward literacy might be characterized as primarily instrumental, but not to the boys' own chosen ends; the usefulness of literacy was in a kind of social exchange of labor for wages.[10] Jack and his brothers earned their mother's approval and their own play time by completing the tasks set for them.

It is worth noting again, as with Luke, the intersection of gender and work relations. Both Luke and Jack seemed to define literacy as a particular kind of work in the sense that it was an activity required

and overseen by adults, rather than one engaged in for their own purposes or pleasure. This meant that literacy activities were often perceived as conflicting with the boys' own intentions and evoked characteristic responses to the imposition of external control. That the adults sponsoring literacy were female also raised potential conflict about the gender appropriateness of literacy activities. Luke's older sisters magnified the conflict by increasing the femaleness of literacy; Jack's older brothers reduced the conflict by offering male camaraderie in literacy activities. While Luke played a mischievous 'bad boy' role in resisting most literacy activities (except those he defined, however briefly, as play), Jack played a 'good boy' role by treating literacy activities as chores to be completed. Both may be seen as ways of responding to issues of gender appropriateness in the domain of literacy, as those issues were expressed within their families.

Gender and work issues were also important to girls as they constructed identities in their relations with family members involving literacy. Contrasts in the biographies of Beatrix and Jane suggest that Chodorow's (1978) argument about the effects of parental divisions of labor may be relevant to the dynamics of literacy learning.

BEATRIX

When I knocked on Beatrix's door in the Apple Hill neighborhood, two girls opened it to let me in. Although no taller than her sister, Beatrix was the older of the two. She was expecting me and said she had some writing she wanted to show me. I greeted her mother and father in the kitchen and followed Beatrix downstairs to the playroom, where she showed me a picture she had drawn of a baby and an apple tree. "She's going to eat it," she said of the apple the baby was picking. She told me her favorite play activity was dress-up and went off to find some clothes to show me, including a baseball cap with a *B* on it. When I asked her what it was, she said, "B, that's the first letter in my name."

I asked Beatrix if she could write her name; when she said yes, I got out my writing supplies so she could show me. She chose primary lined paper and a felt-tip marker and printed her first name in the upper left corner of the paper. When I asked if there was anything else she could write, she replied, "Yes, a rainbow," and drew a series of increasingly larger arcs. She responded to my "anything else?" by making a figure that might have become a letter, ∩ . She said she didn't know what it was yet, then immediately decided it was the beginning of a table and chairs, which she completed in the following way: ⊓⊓ . Although both Luke and Jack had treated writing and drawing as related activities, Beatrix showed the most flexibility in moving between them in her own production. Her primary focus on drawing was apparent in her response to my question about what

she did with the things she wrote. "Cut them out," she said and began to construct a paper hat for herself.

When the paper hat was completed I told Beatrix that I would write what she told me to. She said, "A boat, a houseboat—and don't forget the water." As I drew to her instructions, she began to draw also—a man rowing a boat—and kept up a steady patter about both of our drawings. As her description of her drawing became more story-like, I offered to write what she was saying beside her picture. First she told me to write "sun," labeling part of the picture. But after I wrote it, she crossed it out and said, "We could have him say, 'Hey, move on clouds, 'cause you're rain clouds.'" As I wrote, she continued, "And you better quick, or you'll get kicked away. Yow, I'm sinking!" When I read to her what I had written, she said it was a long story and recited it back to me almost verbatim as if she were reading it. Her decision to have me write what the man was saying kept drawing and writing fully integrated but not repetitive. Each contributed to the overall meaning.[1]

When I asked Beatrix if she had books she liked to read, she said yes and told me she could even make books by stapling paper together and making a story. Of the books she didn't make herself, she found one of her favorites to show me—*Cookie Monster and the Cookie Tree*. I asked if she read it, and she responded that she couldn't read. But when I asked her to show me what she did with the book, she recited the whole story page by page, often in language very close to the original text, her voice filled with dramatic intonation and rhythm. The pictures were her cues to the storyline, triggering her memory of the narrative text.[2]

When I got out the books I had brought, she looked all the way through three of them (ignoring the magazine and the comic book) and wanted all three read to her. She listened quietly as I read *The Happy Egg*, *Whistle for Willie*, and *Just for You*. She had shown me where to begin reading the first two by turning to the page where the story proper began, skipping over title and dedication pages on which print dominated. But in *Just for You* the inside cover was filled with cartoon-like pictures of the main character playing, and she told me to begin reading there, even though there was no print. Again, pictures were clearly her cue to story, although she knew that reading involved more. She was puzzled by the ending of this story, which represented key information in the picture rather than in the text, and wasn't satisfied until she reached an interpretation of what the character had done for his mother. I responded to her request for a second reading by saying she could help me this time, and on the basis of a single hearing she produced a close approximation of the text, again relying heavily on the pictures.

Our discussion of her kindergarten visit was very brief; she seemed to be thinking more about school beginning in a week than about a long ago visit there. We adjourned to the outdoor play equipment, where I chatted

with her parents before leaving. When I interviewed both parents 3 weeks later, they verified Beatrix's love of stories and her interest in written language. She loved being read to, they said, and knew her favorite books by heart. She would correct her father if he changed the language in reading them to her, and she read them from memory to her younger sister. She even made stories part of her play, acting them out and taking various parts.

Her father said he had taught her the alphabet, the sounds of the letters, and how to print her name. She used to ask how to spell words she wanted to write, but now she sounded them out by herself and made up spellings for things like a KEEP OUT sign for her bedroom door. Beatrix's parents showed me her gallery of drawings on her bedroom wall and reported that she had made her own books at nursery school and occasionally at home. She drew on family experiences for her subject matter; the boats and apple trees she shared with me had been part of recent family activities. Her mother observed that Beatrix used to make strings of letters she called writing, but now she seemed more confused about the difference between drawing and writing. I wondered if her apparent confusion resulted from her new effort to integrate drawing and writing in story making.

Of all the children I visited, Beatrix had most fully embedded reading and writing in her everyday reality. For her, pictures and narratives were links between her personal experiences and her imaginative world. Her everyday reality was material for stories, and stories were interpreted in the context of her everyday reality. The drama and language of stories were pleasurable in themselves. And while this love of stories may have come about through the social sharing of stories in her family, Beatrix had clearly internalized the pleasure as her own. She enjoyed sharing stories with others, but it was not her reason for reading and writing. She seemed, more than most children, to meet the conditions Vygotsky (1978) described as ideal for the development of literacy in young children: the relevance of reading and writing to real life, and the integration of literacy into play.

As the oldest child in the family, Beatrix had only her parents to look to as models for literacy and for gender appropriate behavior. This was one of the few families where both parents participated in the interview with me, and the only one where the father reported such an active role in reading and writing with his child. His description of his own literacy behavior suggested that his reading and writing were mostly related to his work in community service and his study for a new career, but he also enjoyed and shared in his wife's and daughter's reading for pleasure. Although Beatrix's mother was a teacher, she

treated her daughter's literacy learning as an opportunity to share her own pleasure in books and dramatic play rather than an occasion for formal instruction. In identifying with her mother and the models she provided of literacy and gender appropriate behavior, Beatrix found herself fully engaged in story making, reading, and writing as ways of making sense of her experience.

Although Beatrix's orientation toward and appropriation of adult role models are characteristic of firstborn children, it is noteworthy that she did not seem to have any anxiety about achievement in relation to reading and writing. They were simply rich and rewarding forms of play for her, not activities by which her competence would be judged. She yielded authority to no one in controlling or evaluating her literacy activities. In this sense, there was no separation of work and play for her, because she did not treat literacy as an adult-sponsored activity. Her engagement was total because it came from her own intentions and purposes, and her parents supported and participated in her self-initated reading and writing.

Beatrix's engagement and playfulness may be attributed to her identification with her mother's model, but in addition there was no suggestion within the family that such literacy activities were less powerful or of a different status than other activities. Perhaps this was because of the way Beatrix's father participated in literacy activities with her and her mother. Gender roles were not sharply differentiated in relation to literacy, or other family activities for that matter. The family appeared to inspire a sense that literacy, in many forms, was one of many effective ways to act in and on the world.[14] Becoming literate for Beatrix thus did not imply a choice between male and female forms of action as they have been traditionally defined within the larger society. Because these definitions place women in activities that are generally less forceful and have less visible results (males produce; females maintain and reproduce)[14] and that are granted less social and economic value, young girls might be expected to experience some tension around the attributes of self foregone in gender identification.[15]

In reducing the differentiation of gender roles, Beatrix's family may represent a mode of transforming inequitable relations between genders. Chodorow (1978) argues that more equal parenting roles are necessary to alter the psychological dynamics by which gender inequality is reproduced within the family. One of the predicted consequences of more equal parenting is that fewer activities would be perceived as gender-linked, and children's emotional connection to both parents would allow children to choose activities without jeopardizing their gender identity. Changes in traditional parenting roles bring tensions as well, however. Beatrix's parents expressed more

concern than most other parents about their daughter's progress in reading and writing, partly because of their general concern about her slow physical growth, but also because her mother's work kept her from being at home with the children all day like other Apple Hill mothers." They seemed unaware of the unusualness of her father's role in literacy activities and its potential benefits. Jane's family, on the other hand, represented a more conventional division of labor around literacy and its possible implications for girls' literacy learning.

JANE

Among the children I visited at their homes, Jane was the least willing to take the lead in our interaction. Quiet and self-contained, she waited for my questions and suggestions with watchful eyes and did not elaborate on her brief responses. We stayed in the living room of the family's small apartment outside the Apple Hill neighborhood, and the room appeared to be a primary play space for Jane and her younger brother. Asked about her favorite thing to do, Jane led me to a corner of the room where her paintings and drawings were hung on the wall and pointed to several. She also showed me a peg construction activity in which the colors were coded by initial letters. She knew which letters represented the various colors. From my writing supplies Jane selected plain paper but got out her own pencil to do some writing for me. When I asked her to write anything she wanted to, she hesitated before printing her name in the upper left corner. Each time I asked if there was anything else she could write, she added a name—her best friend's, then her brother's. At the third request she drew a small picture of a person, counting to be sure that she included five fingers on each hand.

When I offered to write whatever she told me, she handed me her pencil and said, "An animal." Suspecting that she wanted me to draw, I wrote ANIMAL and asked if that was what she wanted. She said yes. Then I drew a picture of a cat and queried, "Or is this what you wanted?" Again she said yes. To my "What else?" she responded, "A person." I asked "Which way?" pointing to the drawing or the writing, and she pointed to both. After I drew a stick figure and printed my daughter's name under it, Jane asked, "Who is that?" I told her about my daughter and then asked if she wanted something else. Relaxing her guard somewhat, she said, "Something funny, a funny face, a silly face." When I finished drawing the face, I asked if we should write something about it. She commented, "It looks like a rabbit. It's part rabbit." I wrote "It's part rabbit," and asked my standard "Anything else?" Jane dictated four more lines, one at a time, following the pattern of the first: "It's part carrot. It's part wheels. It's part person. It's a mixed-up face." I read it all back to her, and she seemed genuinely if not demonstratively pleased with the silliness she had inspired.

When I asked Jane if she had a favorite book, she picked up one on the table about a farm. She responded to my question about its contents by showing me the pictures. Asked about reading, she said she couldn't read it. I told her I would read one of the books I had brought if she would help by choosing which one. She systematically picked up each book and asked what it was, choosing the last one, *Just for You*. When I asked her to show me where to begin, she turned to the first page of text, pointed to the print, and said, "And you read 'til the words end." She listened quietly as I read, turned the pages for me, and answered simply yes when I asked at the end if she had liked it. Then she picked up a book she had skipped earlier in her survey, *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*. She looked through it, commenting extensively on the pictures. I offered to read and asked if she recognized it after the first page. Since she did, I suggested that she could help read it, and she softly echoed my voice where the refrain repeated itself. At the end she asked if that was the song on the back cover; she had apparently noticed and recognized the musical notes.

Jane had not visited kindergarten the previous spring and had little to say about her expectations of it. She changed the topic by asking what we were going to do now. I asked if there was something she wanted to do before I had to go, and she got out some pencil rubbing pictures she had done and gave me one to do. On my way out, Jane's mother asked for directions to the kindergarten room because the school was unfamiliar to the family. She had decided to drive Jane to this school herself rather than have her ride the bus to the assigned school farther away from their apartment complex. I left wishing I had been able to find the key to unlock more of Jane's interest in reading and writing. I sensed that she knew much more than she had let me see.

My interview with Jane's mother several weeks later supported that impression. Jane had known letters and numbers since she was two, and her mother had taught her the sounds related to letters. Although Jane recognized the printed names of all the children at day camp by sight, she did not consider herself a reader. "She can't read," her mother said, "can't remember *and* and *the*, has a block. . . . She wants to learn to read, but she's not ready." Jane loved being read to, however, and enjoyed looking at books on her own. "She would be read to for hours if you'd do it," her mother observed. Fairy tales were her favorites, but she was also interested in animal stories, atlases, and the dictionary, asking questions about what she didn't understand or what piqued her curiosity. She had recently begun to make up stories in dramatic play. But despite her interest in books and stories, she had never pretended to read. "She's a bit of a perfectionist, and she wants to have it exactly right. She knows that, if she says one word wrong, it won't be the same."

This perfectionism showed up in Jane's writing as well. She wouldn't try to figure out the spellings of words she wanted to write, even though her

mother encouraged such invention. She wrote by copying words from the dictionary or sentences from books. "When she sits down to write without anything in front of her, she ends up writing names," her mother reported. Jane was less constrained in the art activities she enjoyed; her mother said, "She likes to draw, design, color. She's very good at color." Her mother offered the following explanation of Jane's behavior: "She has lots of good ideas, and she has never really gotten a chance to work them out. She's surrounded by older children [playmates] mostly and just herded around with a ring in her nose."

Jane's circumstances and inclinations appeared to provide a foundation for literacy learning similar to Beatrix's: her love of stories and books, her engagement in visual representations of meaning, and her mother's modeling and encouragement of pleasure in reading. Yet Jane, unlike Beatrix, seemed to treat literacy as another world, a rich and rewarding but private world separate from her everyday reality. She shared this world with her mother, but only as an active consumer; she was uncomfortable as a producer of reading or writing. While Jane shared with Beatrix the oldest child's investment in mirroring adult role models, she also showed the achievement anxiety that often comes with that position. Although Jane wanted to learn to read and write, her perfectionism kept her from the playful exploration of written language that characterized Beatrix's activities. Jane seemed to be holding back, avoiding the risk of being wrong but also the possibility for solving problems and building confidence in what she knew. Like Luke, Jane appeared to have strong motivations for literacy that were caught in the cross-currents of other identity issues.

While Jane's concern for meeting adult literacy standards may have been reinforced by her relations with older dominating playmates, it seems likely that it was rooted more deeply than that. During the early school years peers, as well as other adults, become important in defining identity, but even then families remain primary (Bank & Kahn, 1982). My limited acquaintance with Jane's family did not afford much direct insight into the sources of her tension about literacy. It seems relevant to note, however, that, although Jane's father was working in the same room while I interviewed her mother, he chose not to participate. Yet at the end of the interview, after the tape recorder was off, he said, "Let's hope Jane's not like me. I was always bored in school." His tone of voice and his occupation as a skilled tradesperson suggested that nothing had happened to change his earlier evaluation of school. This remark and its context raised the possibility that for these parents, gender roles were more sharply divided in relation to literacy than they were in the other families I visited.

In her study of family literacy Taylor (1983) describes two families where fathers had negative experiences with reading in school and consciously chose ways of interacting with their children that did not contribute to similar histories for them. She also reports another brief encounter with a family where a father's image of himself as a non-reader was apparently powerful in shaping his son's difficulty in reading. Taylor suggests that the way a parent deals with his or her own literacy history seems to have more impact on a child's literacy learning than does the history itself. My data allow no more than the observation that Jane's father specifically disqualified himself as a model for a satisfying school experience and the inference that Jane's father and mother represented not complementary, but conflicting worlds in relation to literacy. For Jane, becoming literate like her mother may have entailed the risk of separation from her father's world. Even though the choice of literacy coincided with appropriate gender identification for Jane, the cost of a girl's identification with her mother may be unusually high around activities which represent conflicts between parents because of the implied emotional disconnection from her father.

To the extent that Jane's parents represented extreme differentiation of gender roles around literacy, they reflected separations within larger social systems as well. Sharp divisions between manual and mental labor often interesect with gender divisions so that mental labor, especially school-like tasks as opposed to practical problem solving, is seen as 'effeminate,' the pejorative connotation of the adjective showing the devaluation of activities assigned to women (Willis, 1977). Even within the domain of literacy, various uses of literacy are valued differently as they are marked for gender, for example the general perception of poetry as 'effeminate' in the dominant Anglo-American culture. In general, an aesthetic stance toward text may be regarded as female and devalued because it is not directed toward making or doing something in the 'real world.'[1] But if literacy in general, and some forms of it in particular, are regarded as relatively impotent activities, girls may have difficulty affirming even what is considered gender-appropriate behavior. The differences between Beatrix's and Jane's families with respect to gender relations and literacy may be connected to the relative absence and presence of tension in their approaches to becoming literate.

LITERACY AS A SELF-DEFINING ACT

As Luke and Jack, Beatrix and Jane looked toward September and the beginning of their schooldays, they faced an important entry into a larger social world. In subsequent chapters we will follow them into

that world and see how their engagement in school literacy was rooted in their construction of social relations and identity within families. By the criteria of the emergent literacy and social construction of literacy perspectives, all four children were well prepared for literacy learning in school. The data from the home visits show that all had been read to by parents, all had access to a wide range of books, print, and writing tools, all had parents who actively supported literacy learning, and all knew a great deal about the forms and functions of written language. But the data also show that when, how, and even whether children used the knowledge they had was highly individual and depended on the way they defined themselves in relations with other family members in literacy events. In subsequent chapters I will argue that these orientations toward literacy were the most important frameworks that children brought to literacy learning in the classroom, and they were also a primary source of tension in children's literacy learning as they negotiated relations with adults and peers in the classroom culture.

We have seen in this chapter, however, that the children had already entered the larger social world in significant ways, for the discussion of identity construction within families has highlighted how the larger social world was already present in family dynamics. In relation to gender and work, identified by psychologists as significant identity issues for children of this age, families mediate definitions and values that are part of broader social relations which differentiate along lines of culture, class, and gender. As children construct identities within families, they also position themselves within the larger social world and the ideologies that support present social relations. Whether the outcome of the family's mediation maintains or transforms the status quo, the specific dynamics are highly individual and complex, a point that will be pursued further in Chapter 6.

The consideration of family literacy in this chapter has raised questions and offered interpretations that locate literacy within these broad social constructs of gender and work, and as such within inequitable social relations. Children's motivations and self-perceptions as readers and writers are constructed as part of the larger task of constructing identities, specifically here definitions of themselves in gender and work relations. There is thus no neutral ground for literacy learning. Children's choices about becoming literate in particular ways or about becoming literate at all are self-defining acts.

ENDNOTES

[1] This relationship has been variously described and discussed by Dyson (1982) and Harste et al. (1984).

[2] All of the children's books mentioned in the learning biographies are listed in a

separate bibliography at the end of the book. I have chosen not to clutter the text of the biographies with citations.

[3] My later interviews with parents were recorded on audiotape, and I jotted running fieldnotes during my classroom observations, but I felt that tape recording or writing during these first visits with children would be too distracting for both of us. As a result, there is little dialogue that I can report verbatim. I asked the children if I could take their writing with me, however, so their written work is accurately described or reproduced here.

[4] This seems like the most appropriate way to describe the language which was his parents' first language, but Luke's second language. The only person who spoke this language regularly in the family while Luke was young was his grandmother. Although she took care of him often, Luke was described as not understanding her.

[5] The distinction I intend here is akin to Rosenblatt's (1938) definitions of "efferent" and "aesthetic" stances or Britton's (1970) definitions of "transactional" and "spectator" roles. Both distinguish between the reader-writer's use of text as pragmatically useful information about the world outside the text (i.e., efferent or transactional) and as a virtual experience of the text-created world (i.e., aesthetic or spectator). In any given transaction, however, a clear-cut distinction may be inappropriate, as both motives and effects may be mixed. The distinction also seems related to the ways a reader-writer defines work and play. Both work and play may involve instrumental uses of texts, but unless one is a professional author or literary scholar-critic, aesthetic uses of texts are generally viewed as play. For students, aesthetic uses may be work when they are teacher-assigned and play when they are self-selected, though most school-assigned reading is seen by Rosenblatt as efferent, or instrumental, in stance.

[6] A study by Downing et al. (1979) reported that North American adults perceive reading as a more appropriate activity for young girls than for boys, although their data and those of May and Ollila (1981) show that young children do not share this perception, with preschoolers even reversing the gender attribution. These studies are not very comprehensive or complex in their treatment of either literacy or gender roles, and the topic merits fuller consideration, especially of the gender attributions of varieties of literacy for adults. In describing British working class culture, Willis (1977) discusses the distinction made between mental and manual labor and the "lads'" attribution of mental labor to females, and by extension to "sissies." It is not as clear how mental labor, and therefore literacy, is valued by middle and upper class groups. While literacy is certainly a badge of high social status for males as well as females, it may be generally regarded, outside academic, literary, and some religious circles, as a necessary tool for males rather than as a powerful or pleasurable activity in itself. In other words, in economically developed Western cultures a full investment of self in reading or writing seems to be widely considered female. Studies by Radway (1984), Bleich (1986), and Flynn (1986) suggest that the experience of reading fiction varies significantly for men and women, with women treating the text as a world they emotionally enter and live in while men treat the text more distantly and judgmentally as the product of an author's invention.

[7] Cohen (1981) describes a similar phenomenon among mothers of the professional middle class. In the families she studied, even where traditional "sex roles" did not pertain, child rearing and pedagogy were the special concern of mothers.

[8] I did not make any special effort to include fathers, however, and my gender as well as my preference for having interviews while children were in school may have worked against their participation.

[9] My home visits with the other children and their families followed the same pattern as Luke's. I always began by asking the children to show me their favorite play activity. This gave me information about their interests and usually established a relaxed interaction in which children were encouraged to take the lead. Then I got out my

assortment of writing equipment and asked children to write whatever they could for me. I encouraged them to continue as long as they seemed comfortable, then offered to write for them from dictation. I asked a few questions about other people's writing—who did they know who wrote, what did that person write—but moved on quickly when these elicited little interest or response.

After children had shown me their own favorite books and what they did with them, I offered to read one of the books I had brought if they would help me. In both cases I was interested to see what choices children made, how they made them, and what they knew about the organization of books and print. I would ask them to show me where to begin reading, for example, and what to do when I finished reading a page. I was also interested in how they responded to the reading and let them set the pace. Questions about what other people read yielded little, and I found that my final questions about children's expectations of kindergarten were usually conversation stoppers. I don't know whether children were nervous about this imminent adventure, or whether they found it odd that an adult who was going to be there seemed to know so little about it. At any rate, I was usually glad I had saved this topic for last.

The parent interviews were held with one or both parents (by their choice) at home, usually when the children were not there. I reviewed with parents what their children had done with me, asking them if these were typical behaviors and what else they could tell me about their children's interaction with written language. Sharing my concrete experiences with the children was important because it signaled to parents that I was interested in behaviors that they did not think of as "real" reading and writing and it encouraged a similar level of concreteness in their reports of children's behaviors. It also usually delayed until the end of the interview their questions about how well their children were prepared for reading and writing instruction and what they should be doing at home. It was not easy for me to play the 'naive observer' role when parents knew that I taught courses about reading and writing instruction at the university. I avoided the 'expert' role as much as possible, but I also felt it was part of the reciprocity of participant observation research to respond genuinely to their concerns. The most equitable way I found to do this was by sharing my own experiences as a parent. In keeping with the spirit of participant observation research, this general format for the home visits and parent interviews took a unique shape in my interaction with each family.

[7] Willis (1977) makes a similar comparison between the exchange of labor for wages and the exchange of respect for knowledge in school, which is the first in a chain of exchanges: knowledge for qualifications, qualified activity for high pay, pay for goods and services.

[8] In this case written language was clearly "drawn speech," as Vygotsky (1978) called the link that must be made by children between their drawing of persons and objects and their use of letters to "draw" speech.

[9] In Sulzby's (1985) study of the emergent reading of kindergarten children, this kind of verbatim pretend reading was the response category highest in characteristics of written story-like language.

[10] On this point it is interesting to consider the relevance of data from Radway's (1984) study of middle-class women's romance reading. The women she interviewed regularly reported that their husbands devalued their reading of romance fiction as a leisure activity, objecting to the money spent for the books and to the time devoted to reading them. The women pointed out that their children's toys and their husbands' gadgets and sports watching were never subject to similar criticism. On the other hand, the women identified the primary motivation for the reading as escape from the everyday reality of their work as homemakers, wives, and mothers. Thus both men and women in these families treated the reading of romance fiction as an activity that was

not an effective way to act in and on the world. The women's husbands came to accept their reading only when women justified the activity by demonstrating the historical knowledge they acquired from the books or by turning to writing romance fiction themselves as a commercial activity. Although this value system was specifically associated with the reading of romances in Radway's study, it may be indicative of broader patterns regarding the valuing of gender-linked literacy behavior. Beatrix's family appeared not to participate in such a gender-differentiated value system.

[3] Chodorow (1978) and D. E. Smith (1987) both describe these differences between men's and women's work, with Smith suggesting that the very distinction between work and leisure is better suited to describing men's activities than women's. Willis (1977) offers a useful discussion of the distinction between men's and women's work and the important intersection of gender and work issues in the reproduction of social class.

[4] This is not to deny the tension boys may experience in denying nurturing aspects of self in gender identification, but the economic value and relative social power of male roles are greater compensation than girls receive for their loss. Freud's original formulation of "penis envy," wherein girls reject their mothers for their obviously inferior genitals, has been reinterpreted by some on a metaphorical level, having more to do with ego development than with sexuality: "The penis, or phallus, is a symbol of power or omnipotence, whether you have one as a sexual organ (as a male) or as a sexual object (as her mother 'possesses' her father's). A girl wants it for the powers which it symbolizes and the freedom it promises from her previous sense of dependence, and not because it is inherently and obviously better to be masculine" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 123). In a male-dominant society, a girl's simultaneous separation from and identification with her mother offers only the benefit of indirect power through attachment to males.

[5] This comparison expresses a cultural ideal rather than reality. Of the 15 families I interviewed, seven mothers worked or attended school full time outside the home. Three single parents were among the seven. Thus just over half the mothers were at home with their children all day. (This proportion held for the four families who did not literally live in the Apple Hill neighborhood.) None of the other families with working mothers spoke about tensions in this regard, but then that was not the subject of our conversations.

[6] Radway's (1984) study of women's reading of romance fiction directly supports this notion.

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chapter 3
Literacy Instruction in the Kindergarten Classroom

Before examining the classroom literacy learning of Luke, Jack, Beatrix, Jane, and others, it is important to describe the social world they entered in the kindergarten classroom. To a large entent this world was shaped by their teacher's pedagogical assumptions and practices, for these assumptions and practices governed her organization of the physical and social environment and it was within this environment that she and the children negotiated their relations in literacy events. Subsequent chapters will focus on the learning biographies of individual children within the classroom; the present chapter provides the framework for that discussion by describing the daily activities that constituted the literacy program in the kindergarten and the theoretical assumptions on which the program was based.

The chapter begins with a narrative description of the first day of school, into which is telescoped a history, or 'biography,' of the class for the rest of the year.[1] Following the narrative is a discussion of the teacher's theoretical assumptions and their sources in the literature on beginning literacy. This narrative and the related theoretical discussion represent the teacher's point of view on pedagogy: the kindergarten teacher, Susan Benedict, took the lead in writing the description of the first day of school, and the statement of assumptions underlying the literacy program was constructed jointly by us for conference presentations.

Following a discussion which locates Mrs. Benedict's pedagogical assumptions and practices within the emergent literacy and social construction perspectives on beginning literacy, I consider her pedagogical approach from the perspective of literacy as social status and identity. The chapter concludes with a description of the families' reactions to the classroom literacy program using the framework of this larger social analysis. I argue that, despite a great deal of continuity between family and classroom values and practices, there

were inherent tensions for parents resulting from the position of the professional middle class within the larger society.

Because this chapter deals broadly with assumptions and goals, the discussion of pedagogy is necessarily somewhat idealized at this point. Chapters 4 and 5 uncover tensions in the literacy learning of individual children by describing the pedagogy as it was realized in the daily interactions of teacher and students. At the end of Chapter 5 I return to a consideration of tensions for the teacher in implementing her pedagogical approach. For now we join Mrs. Benedict as she meets the school bus and welcomes the children to the world of the classroom.

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Jack, Beatrix, and Luke stepped cautiously off the school bus accompanied by the school's principal, who always rode the kindergarten bus the first day of school. Right now he was their closest link with home. Their teacher, Mrs. Benedict, was waiting there to greet them as they shyly approached the school. Jack acted 'tough,' but he stuck close to his friend Arnie, as Luke darted in and out among the other children. Beatrix sucked her thumb and held the hand of her friend Beverly. Jane watched from the family car, then slowly emerged and followed the others inside. The morning kindergarten class had arrived for its first day of school.

The children and Mrs. Benedict entered the classroom together. She had organized an environment in which children would be offered many opportunities to deal with print as they pursued their daily activities. Her basic premise was that children would grow as readers and writers in the context of problem-solving activities throughout the kindergarten curriculum. The classroom was filled with print, and many activities would incorporate reading and writing without requiring conventionally correct responses from children. The focus would be on how individual children responded to and used print and how they grew from their further encounters with literacy in the classroom.

This was a cool September morning, and most of the children were wearing jackets or sweaters. Mrs. Gundersheim, the classroom aide, helped the children locate their hooks in the coat closet with the statement, "Let's find yours." Each child looked for the hook with his or her name written beside it. Some children brought special possessions from home, so Mrs. Benedict helped all the children find their cubbies, again by looking for their names. After depositing their belongings, children explored the room. It had changed since they were here last. Most of them had visited in the spring with their parents. At that time the room had been a busy place. Bulletin boards displayed children's work, the shelves were overflowing with materials, and the room was alive with 20 busy kindergarteners.

Today the room seemed bare. The bulletin boards were practically empty, and so were most of the shelves. The emptiness was part of Mrs. Benedict's plan. She and Mrs. Gundersheim had walked around the classroom on their knees to get a child's eye view of the environment. On this important first day their purpose was to stimulate but not to overwhelm. This was a space children and teachers would share. The environment would evolve with contributions from all the people who worked and played here. Titles like "This week we are reading books by Else Homelund Minarik" on one nearly empty bulletin board gave a hint of things to come to children like Beverly who could read it. However, most of the children were not yet reading print with that little context. For them it indicated that this classroom, like the world around them, was filled with print that would become meaningful as it became relevant to their interests and activities.

One by one Mrs. Benedict invited the children to a table to find cards bearing their full names. Beatrix found hers immediately; Jane hung back, checking them all carefully before choosing. Luke needed Mrs. Benedict to say, "This is yours." Each child put his or her card in the "I am here" box. "This is how we know you came to school today," Mrs. Benedict said. Meanwhile Mrs. Gundersheim was helping children find name tags and put them on. In their first 10 minutes in kindergarten the children had already had four interactions with print. In this classroom one of the uses of print was to help children with basic daily routines like taking attendance, hanging up coats, and locating cubbies.

Mrs. Benedict gathered the class together in the meeting area and sat with her back to the bulletin board. On subsequent days the children would fill in the calendar chart with the day and the date, read the snack sign announcing the morning's snack, and identify the September birthdays or find out if anyone had lost a tooth. But today it was important to get acquainted, so children told their names and their favorite color, then covered up their name tags and beamed as Mrs. Benedict recited everyone's name and favorite color from memory. Then she opened the oversized *Kindergarten Song Book* and began to sing "Eency Weency Spider." The print was visible but not the focal point of this activity today. Most children already knew the song, and everyone joined in the second time through. Many of the songs sung throughout the year were handprinted and illustrated in the song book. As the year progressed the children were quick to locate their favorites and could often be seen poring over the pages with friends. As they learned the words to individual songs from experience, they began to read and sing from the printed page, just as Beatrix had learned to read her favorite books at home.

Morning meeting ended with a tour of the classroom. Mrs. Benedict invited the children to figure out from the equipment and materials what kind of activity went on in each area prior to drawing the children's attention

to the sign which designated the area. (The areas were meeting, writing, library, art, math, listening, blocks, drama, sand table, water table, games and puzzles, and painting.) In most cases children were able to read the written signs as a result of the context in which they found themselves. Mrs. Benedict was not surprised to hear Jack read "blocks" on the block area sign or to hear a chorus of "sand" at the sand table. In order to participate in activities in the areas, the children had to sign up at the "What are you up to?" board. The board included the name of each area accompanied by a picture with hooks next to each sign. The number of hooks determined how many could go to each area. Children hung cards with their names on them next to the areas they chose.

After the tour Mrs. Benedict and Mrs. Gundersheim helped the children make their selections for "children's choice time." (Most days would also include "teacher's choice time" when activities and areas were assigned.) Reading the sign-up board was a complex problem-solving task for many children, but by the end of the first few weeks most children were coping with the problem in their own personal ways. Some determined the areas by using the pictures. Others used the sounds of initial letters to guess the names of the areas. Some remembered the positions of the areas on the board. Still others looked for names of friends already in an area. For example, Jack decided to join his friend Arnie in the drama area. He successfully hung his card on a hook beside the drama area sign by finding his friend's card rather than looking at the pictures or labels. The children's behaviors at the board gave their teachers insight into the ways they interpreted print.

As most of the children began their chosen activities, Mrs. Gundersheim moved from area to area talking with the children about what they were doing. Later she would also write signs for them to use in their play or descriptions of what they were doing to share with them.

> No trucks allowed.
> Jack is building a camper.

The children would ask for signs, maps, recipes, and shopping lists. When they saw how writing made their play more realistic, they would begin to write what they needed themselves.

Meanwhile Mrs. Benedict invited small groups of children to the writing area. She and Mrs. Gundersheim had prepared a writing folder for each child containing a hardbound journal with unlined paper. As each group found their folders, Mrs. Benedict introduced the journals to them: "This is called a journal and has your name on it. It's for you to write in every day, whatever you want to write—stories, notes, letters, you can draw pictures if you want to." As most children began to draw, Mrs. Benedict added, "You can pretend to write if you don't know how." As the children finished, Mrs.

Benedict talked with them individually about what they had done. Her purpose this first day was to observe how each child responded to the request to write and to establish the process of conferring about writing with a focus on the child's message and his or her ways of representing it.

For example, Beatrix began drawing eagerly in her journal, then made letters next to her picture and wrote her name at the top of the page. When Mrs. Benedict invited Beatrix to tell her about what she had done, Beatrix reported that the writing was "just letters," then described her drawing as a man rowing a boat. She continued, "He's saying, 'Go away, clouds. These are rain clouds. Help! I'm sinking.'" Mrs. Benedict pointed to the letters Beatrix had written and observed, "I see where you have the G for 'go.'" Beatrix responded, "Oh, yeah, it says what he's saying."

In the months ahead the children would go to the writing area at least twice a week for teacher's choice time and would have the option of writing for children's choice time. Teachers would write themselves in the writing area and confer with children about their drawing and writing. The authors' circle would be introduced in early December as an occasion for children to share their writing with the whole class. Children would decide whether or not to share and whether or not to take questions and or comments when they finished. Teachers would participate in the authors' circle, modeling audience response by offering questions and comments when called on and asking children to amplify or clarify their responses. Authors' circles would occur two or three times a week for the rest of the year.

Publication was another activity yet to come. Early in December the first student-authored book would be published. Pieces chosen by the child would be published when the author and the teacher agreed they were complete. Published pieces would be typed in primary type with conventional spelling and punctuation by the teacher, illustrated by the author, and bound in hard covers. They would become part of the classroom library and could be borrowed and taken home by the children. Both the authors' circle and publication would grow out of the children's engagement in the activity of writing begun this first day of school.

As children's choice time drew to a close, the bell was rung to signal clean-up; in 5 minutes it was time for snack. Mrs. Gundersheim directed the children's attention to the snack sign and asked what they thought the snack might be. Beatrix said, "Apple," looking at the picture of an apple tree above the September calendar. Leo said, "Crackers." When Mrs. Gundersheim asked him how he knew, he said he had seen the crackers on the table. His teacher's focus was not on whether answers were right or wrong but on the cues children used to make sense of print. Mrs. Gundersheim then pointed out the print on the job board and helped the children figure out that Sarah and Jack were snack helpers and would set the tables, and that Arnie, Lucy, George, and Jane would clean the tables after snack.

Most days snack would not be provided for the children but prepared by them. Like other activities in the curriculum, cooking offered opportunities for children to interact and solve problems, using both mathematics and oral and written language. Recipes presented children with another use for written language. Writing a recipe to record what they had done helped children to sequence, organize, and see the need for clarity in the context of an activity they valued. As this first morning drew to a close, Mrs. Benedict called the children to the meeting area for story time. She described *Little Bear* as one of her favorite stories and asked if the children knew of any bear stories. Calls of "The Three Bears," "Winnie-the-Pooh," and "A Kiss for Little Bear" were heard, and Luke added, "Grizzlies." Everyone listened with avid interest as Mrs. Benedict read "Birthday Soup." Jane sat right next to her and said quietly at one point that the mother bear was probably baking a birthday cake. The children counted the birthday candles aloud with Little Bear and laughed appreciatively at the end of the story.

In the days that followed, more Little Bear stories were read at story time, and their author Else Homelund Minarik became the first "Author of the Week," with the children composing a group chart for the bulletin board about the books she wrote.[2] Other bear books appeared in the library area, and children were invited to "read" them. For now teachers often read to small groups of children in the library area. Later in the year teachers would read with individual children and, for those who seemed ready, would encourage attention to print and the use of multiple strategies to make sense of print (e.g., skipping unknown words or making predictions based on pictures, semantic plausibility, or initial letter).

Beginning with bears, B became the first "Letter of the Week" and the focus of activities across the curriculum. Biscuits were baked for snack, bears were painted and cut out for the bulletin board, and birds and butterflies were studied. Children began to notice and comment on B's everywhere. At meeting one morning Arnie pointed out that he was wearing a shirt with a bee and a bear for B week. The Letter of the Week activity was not a comprehensive phonics program but a source of many opportunities for meaning-centered interactions with children about written language.[3]

All these activities would follow as the months of the kindergarten calendar unfolded. While the children gathered their belongings from the closet and their cubbies, Mrs. Benedict told them to check their mailboxes by the door for mail to take home. The principal waited outside to join them for the bus ride home. Beatrix returned her thumb to her mouth, Jack complained to Arnie that they hadn't gotten to play outside, Luke ran back to retrieve a handful of Star Wars toys from his cubby, and Jane peered out the window to be sure her mother was waiting. The first day of kindergarten was over, but the stage had been set for a year in which children's growth

and writers would be carefully nurtured as part of their meaningful activities in the classroom.

THE TEACHER'S THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Literacy instruction in Mrs. Benedict's kindergarten, and in the first and second grade classrooms that followed, was based on a set of theoretical assumptions about children's language learning. Mrs. Benedict's and Mr. Sullivan's assumptions evolved from their interpretations of research on children's oral and written language development. The teachers' assumptions are stated explicitly here in keeping with the view that teachers' assumptions and beliefs provide the foundation for their instructional practices (Harste et al., 1984). To understand the pedagogical context of literacy learning for Jack, Beatrix, Luke, and Jane, it is important to look at the specific practices their teachers used in relation to the purposes and assumptions behind them. This instructional environment is best defined not by the Letter of the Week or the authors' circle, but by the assumptions that led the teachers to choose these activities and to use them in particular ways.

These theoretical assumptions and the associated instructional practices are rooted in the work of many scholars, researchers, and teachers. It is important to outline those sources here as a way of grounding the teachers' assumptions in particular bodies of knowledge and ways of knowing, for how we interpret what we see depends upon the communities to which we belong and the shared understandings they generate. This is as true for teachers as it is for children and researchers. Thus identification of the teachers' intellectual communities provides a broader context for understanding how the teachers came to their ways of teaching. Following are the beliefs that guided Mrs. Benedict's and Mr. Sullivan's instructional decisions, as they were formulated by us together in presentations at professional conferences.

1. Children figure out the forms of language without direct, structured teaching. Mrs. Benedict believed that, just as children learn the rules of oral language from listening and speaking, they will learn the rules of written language from reading and writing. For instance, children are not formally taught the various pronunciations of the past-tense ending, but they eventually learn the grammatical principle governing their use. By the same token, children do not need to be formally taught the various spellings of long and short vowels. Since children naturally seek and discover the patterns in language, Mrs. Benedict did not devise or use a scope-and-sequence chart for teaching the forms of written language. Instead, she designed an

environment where children would encounter and use written language in their work and play in ways that supported their interests and abilities in pattern learning.

The vision of children's language development as a creative and constructive process derives from the work of Noam Chomsky (1959, 1965) in antithesis to Skinner's (1957) behaviorist explanation of verbal learning. Children's early language, Chomsky argued, does not consist of parrot-like repetitions which are reinforced or punished by parents. Children's language from the beginning is based on mental structures or rules which the child induces from exposure to language. Many researchers following Chomsky's lead have reported detailed descriptions of children's construction of the grammars of their mother tongues (see Dale, 1976, and deVilliers & deVilliers, 1978, for reviews of this work).

Evidence that children similarly construct the rules of written language was offered by Read's (1971) study of the patterns in spellings invented by children at home before school. Other researchers have extended Read's work on spelling to the patterns of school children (Beers & Henderson, 1977; C. Chomsky, 1971; Zutell, 1978) and have reported evidence of children's rule learning in relation to the units represented in written language (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982), the complex syntactic structures typical of written language (C. Chomsky, 1972), the structure of stories (Applebee, 1978; Brown, 1977), and patterns of textual cohesion (King & Rentel, 1981). In addition, the study of oral reading has shown how readers' errors or miscues are consistent with their knowledge of the rules of written language (K. S. Goodman & Burke, 1968, 1973; Y. M. Goodman, 1971; Weber, 1970).

From this work many scholars argue that instruction in written language should take advantage of children's natural ability to induce the rules of language by exposing them to a rich variety of print and encouraging them to engage in reading and writing in ways that do not initially emphasize correctness (C. Chomsky, 1971, 1972; Goodman & Goodman, 1979; F. Smith, 1971). F. Smith (1973, p. 195), for example, argues against a number of conventional practices in reading instruction, including early teaching of the rules of reading, and concludes that teachers must "respond to what the child is trying to do." Graves (1983) advocates a similar approach to teaching writing, urging teachers to abandon writing textbooks and workbooks and to respond instead to students' writing in process.

2. Children learn language by using what they already know to figure out what is new. Mrs. Benedict knew that children's early oral language was closely tied to familiar contexts. They had learned to

understand and speak in situations where meaning was clear from the objects and actions accompanying language. And they dealt with the unfamiliar by seeking connections to what they already knew. Similarly, she believed, their early interpretations of print depended on links to familiar objects, actions, and oral language. Thus Mrs. Benedict created an environment where written language was tied to objects, actions, and talk that were already familiar to children or that became familiar as part of classroom routines. And she encouraged children to use what they already knew as the basis for interpreting and generating written language.

Support for this assumption can be found in F. Smith's (1979) argument for the importance of children's use of familiar context in language development. Researchers of oral language had observed that children's first utterances are closely tied to the immediate context, and that children initially comprehend words only when they are associated with familiar nonverbal signals (Brown, 1973). Smith argues that these situations provide the basis for children to figure out how language works, because it is embedded in a context they already understand. Research has shown, for example, how young children become increasingly verbal in the context of familiar routines with caregivers, such as peek-a-boo games (Ratner & Bruner, 1978).

Evidence of similar patterns in literacy development is offered by studies that document the reading and writing behaviors that emerge in the context of children's familiar home routines and play activities (Bissex, 1980; Taylor, 1983). Other research shows that children initially comprehend words in print only when they are accompanied by their familiar graphic or situational contexts, for example, "McDonald's" with the golden arches (Y. M. Goodman, 1980), and describes how children's drawings and oral language provide the context for their development of writing (Dyson, 1983).

These findings lead to proposals for classrooms where language instruction is not fragmented into isolated, sequential skills, and where language is not separated from other forms of expression such as art, music, movement, and gesture. Clay (1982), for example, advocates programs where reading and writing are not separated from oral language or each other and where instruction is not constrained by the imposition of logical skill sequences. And Harste et al. (1984) argue for open-ended language activities where children may choose their forms of expression and, through repeated encounters with favorite activities, discover and attend to more aspects of written language.

3. Children learn language through interaction, using it to communicate with others. From the very beginning, Mrs. Benedict be-

lieved, children's language is a way of connecting with other people. Young children and their parents do not engage in language drills but use language to work and play together, to achieve personal and social goals. They communicate. Written language serves similar purposes, Mrs. Benedict assumed, with communication at the center. Thus she sought to offer many activities where written language would be useful in achieving children's goals and where reading and writing were ways for children to connect with each other and with adults.

The work of Bruner (1978) and Halliday (1975) lays the foundation for a communication-centered model of language development. Both describe how children and parents focus on the functions of language and the purposes of speakers in the interactions where language is taught and learned. Bruner describes in detail the patterns in children's development of linguistic and nonlinguistic communication in dialogue with caregivers. While Bruner focuses on the broadly defined and presumably universal social functions of language, other work shows how cultural variations in people's ways with words are enacted in the teaching and learning of language (Heath, 1983). These differences make it clear that children learn language as a way of participating in their communities.

That literacy also has its roots in the communicative functions of language is the theme of ethnographies that describe the development of literacy in particular communities, showing that children learn the forms of literacy which are valued in their communities by participating in the social interactions where literacy functions (Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983; Cochran-Smith, 1984). Other researchers report that in children's early reading and writing, communicative intent precedes conventional form (Clay, 1975, 1982; Dyson, 1984b; Harste et al., 1984). Children often attend to story meaning before graphic accuracy in reading, for example, and report the intended messages of their 'scribble' writing.

The results of such studies raise concerns about the potential discontinuities between the implicit literacy curriculum of the community, which focuses on communication and social meanings, and the conventional literacy curriculum of the school, with its focus on form and convention. Taylor (1983) argues for curricula which bring community functions and uses of print into the classroom. She also points out the need to create a literate community within the classroom, where social relations enable the functional use of print. Heath (1983) extends these notions by suggesting ways to bridge from the community's functions of literacy to traditional academic functions.

1. Children learn language best when they are free to make choices and take risks, when errors are acceptable, and when achievement is

recognized. When young children begin to talk, Mrs. Benedict knew, their parents do not expect perfection. They take delight in children's first words and sentences, despite (and often because of) their unconventional pronunciation and grammar. Young children are notoriously headstrong in setting the topic of conversation and remarkably unself-conscious about their attempts to put intentions into words. And parents, by and large, applaud their children's initiative and inventiveness in language. Mrs. Benedict believed that children's development of written language would thrive under similar conditions. She encouraged children to take initiatives and be inventive in reading and writing—to choose their own materials, to solve their own problems in producing and responding to print. She knew that, when they did, they would make errors and arrive at unconventional solutions. She applauded their initiative and inventiveness and studied their errors for insights into children's growing knowledge of written language. She believed that their confidence in themselves as independent readers and writers would foster the continued engagement in reading and writing that nurtures further growth.

The importance of an environment which nurtures children's confidence as language learners by encouraging risk taking and rewarding achievement is highlighted in the work of Kaye (1982). He outlines a model of human development in which parents create persons by treating infants as if they are independently accomplishing tasks when they are in fact playing an apprentice role with parent support. In particular, he describes how early dialogues between parent and child are sustained by the parent's responses to the child's initiatives. The child is treated as a full conversational partner, even though the adult is doing the work which keeps the conversation going, that is, responding in ways that invite another response from the child. Young children rarely use such conversational 'turn-abouts.' In these parent–child dialogues the child's attention is not called to any errors or incompleteness in performance but only to the successful completion of the task. In such interactions parents reward whatever children are currently able to do and provide the larger structure into which their behavior fits. Other work by Donaldson (1979) describes ideal learning conditions as those in which children choose their own focus and take risks to solve problems because engagement in real problem-solving establishes appropriate conditions for self-correction of errors.

Many studies of home literacy describe similar conditions for the development of reading and writing: that is, children's participation in literacy interactions with parents. For example, parents read to children and invite their participation or children initiate literacy activities that parents applaud and coach by responding to their questions (Bissex, 1980; Read, 1971; Taylor, 1983). But other studies show cultural variation in the environments of home literacy learning

and suggest that cultural and class differences in this respect may lead to differences in children's literacy achievement in school (Heath, 1983; Snow, 1983). Heath's work shows that, when teachers are aware of such cultural differences, they can develop curricula that provide appropriate problem-solving situations to value and expand the strengths of all children.

Instructional recommendations for designing environments to foster children's confidence as literacy learners are generally consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) advice that literacy curricula be centered in young children's play, the natural province of risk taking and problem solving. The creation of a workshop atmosphere is recommended to encourage student initiative and ownership in reading and writing and to provide opportunities for teachers to support children's learning (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Hansen, Newkirk, & Graves 1985; Newman, 1985). In such classrooms the teacher's role becomes one of providing demonstrations of literacy and observing and responding to children's self-selected literacy activities (Harste et al., 1984).

In sum, Mrs. Benedict's pedagogical assumptions and practices were oriented toward creating classroom conditions for literacy learning that reflected the usual conditions for children's language learning outside of school. It is important to note, however, that teachers like Mrs. Bendict who adhere to this view take more conscious responsibility for instruction than most parents and caregivers of young children. In families and communities language is rarely the focus of instruction; it is a tool for and a by-product of people's work and play. Teachers like Mrs. Benedict design activities that engage children's attention in such work and play but that also purposefully provide demonstrations of literacy and opportunities for teachers to coach children's literacy learning.

In regard to the theoretical perspectives on beginning literacy outlined in Chapter 1, Mrs. Benedict's assumptions are derived primarily from the emergent literacy perspective, and secondarily from the social construction of literacy perspective. Assumptions 1 and 2 directly reflect the focus of emergent literacy on universal cognitive processes that govern the learning of individual children. It has been common for researchers from the emergent literacy perspective to advocate instructional practices that support what is regarded as the child's 'natural' development of literacy (e.g., Goodman & Goodman, 1979; Gourley, 1981). Assumptions 3 and 4 reflect the concern of the social construction perspective with the interactional dynamics through which children are socialized into literacy practices. Researchers from the social construction perspective have often recommended instructional practices that invite children's participation in literacy as a social activity and are congruent with community practices (e.g., Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983). Assumptions 3 and 4,

broadly stated, do not explicitly take cultural differences into account because they were formulated in a context where cultural continuity with the community was taken for granted.

While the assumptions and practices described above are currently regarded as a 'progressive' approach to literacy instruction, the fact that they reflect primarily the emergent literacy perspective and secondarily the social construction of literacy perspective gives cause for concern. First, to the extent that these assumptions about language and literacy learning are based on research from the emergent literacy perspective, they may be biased toward white, middle-class language and literacy practices, which have been taken to be optimal, if not universal, within this perspective (see, e.g., Delpit, 1986, 1988). Similarly, unless the assumptions based on research from the social construction perspective are specifically oriented to particular cultures, they may universalize the practices of the dominant culture. And unless these pedagogical assumptions and practices are also examined within the larger social context of status and dominance relations, they may be biased toward maintaining present social relations (see, e.g., Gilbert, 1989b; Giroux, 1987; Harman & Edelsky, 1989). The final section of this chapter thus considers this pedagogical approach within the literacy as social status and identity perspective and in relation to the families served by the school.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF PEDAGOGY

Although many scholars have described how pedagogical practices in the early years of school reflect and reproduce relations of class and gender (see, e.g., Apple & King, 1977; Bernstein, 1975; Clarricoates, 1978; Rist, 1970; Walkerdine, 1985), little attention has been given to these dynamics in the specific pedagogical practices of beginning literacy. Several writers have suggested the need for such analysis and examined particular aspects of literacy instruction (Gilbert, 1989b; Harman & Edelsky, 1989; Shannon, 1989), but only McDermott's work (1976, 1978) is based on research directly examining the dynamics of pedagogical practice in traditionally oriented reading instruction. Because Bernstein (1975) locates within relations of social class pedagogies similar to the one described in this chapter, his discussion of "invisible pedagogies" provides a useful framework for considering the larger social context of Mrs. Benedict's pedagogical approach.

Bernstein defines invisible pedagogies as those where learners appear to have considerable control over their activities, where the sequence and pace of learning are flexible, and where the criteria for evaluating achievement are multiple and diffuse. "Visible" ped-

agogies, on the other hand, are teacher controlled and explicit and monolithic in sequence, pace, and evaluation critieria.[4] Play is identified as the central concept in invisible pedagogies. Almost all of the child's activity is considered play and is observed and interpreted in terms of developmental learning theories. Teachers' arrangement of the environment and their responses to children's activity are based on these interpretations and implicitly shape children's activity.[5] Thus children's play in such pedagogies is their work. This description of invisible pedagogies seems to capture the underlying principles of literacy pedagogies like Mrs. Benedict's in which teachers incorporate literacy activities into children's play and observe and support children's literacy learning based on theories of cognitive development.

Bernstein traces the origin of such pedagogies to subgroups of the middle class where work and play are not sharply distinguished because work is seen as offering intrinsic satisfactions as well as social prestige. This fraction of the middle class—the "new middle class" in Bernstein's terms—is engaged in professions that focus on cultural reproduction, for example, medicine, social services, education, mass media, the legal system, or civil service, rather than on material production. Such positions, at least at upper levels of the hierarchy, typically require self-regulating individuals who internalize and act on the goals and values of the organization for which they work (Chodorow, 1978).[6] Moreover, these "agents of symbolic control," as Bernstein calls them, depend upon interpersonal communication skills rather than overt authority to accomplish their work. Thus invisible pedagogies may be seen as preparing children for work as it is defined in these social strata. Certainly the emphasis in pedagogical approaches like Mrs. Benedict's on the intrinsic satisfactions of literacy and the goal of interpersonal communication suggests a view of literacy as the kind of work Bernstein describes for this social group.

Bernstein also argues for the impact of class dynamics on gender relations. Preparation for the careers of the "new middle class" requires the extension of invisible pedagogies into childrearing practices, transforming the nature of mothering by demanding total surveillance of children and the adoption of particular modes of interpersonal communication. Thus as primary caregivers women are expected not only to take responsibility for the physical and emotional nurturance of children, but also to play a direct pedagogical role in the development of their cognitive and social capacities.[7]

Families outside the professional middle class, according to Bernstein, may find invisible pedagogies incomprehensible, irrelevant, and counter to their perceived interests. Even though invisible pedagogies may be potentially more beneficial to working-class children than are traditional visible pedagogies,[8] working-class parents are generally

described as looking for strong adult authority figures in schools and overt instruction in explicitly defined skills (Bernstein, 1975; Everhart, 1983; Rubin, 1976). Such characteristics are consistent with work as it is experienced by this social group—activity initiated and controlled by those in positions of authority and rewarded for conformance to standardized specifications. In this regard, parental expectations of education can be seen as limited by their experience and limiting of children's opportunities. This interpretation ignores the realism in the parents' perceptions, however, for it remains true that access to the credentials and qualifications for upward mobility depends on the criteria of visible pedagogies—for example, standardized test scores and grade averages in the predominantly visible pedagogies of secondary schools and colleges.

This fact, as well as parents' investments in traditional pedagogies because of their personal histories and/or social class backgrounds, also leads to tensions within the professional middle class over invisible pedagogies, according to Bernstein.[9] These parents, perhaps more than others, are aware of both the qualities and the qualifications their children must have to enter middle-class professions. Because the ideology of mothering for this group has taken on the character of invisible pedagogies,[10] the family usually assumes primary responsibility for developing the required qualities in children. But while the family may also be able to provide considerable support for achieving the necessary qualifications, it is the school that defines and delivers them.[11] Thus parents of the professional middle class are in a potentially contradictory position in relation to visible and invisible pedagogies, since they have interests vested in both.

Sharp social class differences were not observable among the families in this study. Most of them could be described as part of Bernstein's new middle class because of the nature of their work, though many were not in the highest levels of that group. About half the fathers were employed in faculty or technical support positions within institutions of higher education, the community's primary business; the others included a clinical psychologist, mid-level business managers and salespeople, a police officer, and a house painter. About half the mothers were not employed outside the home at the time of the study; those who were included college faculty, public school teachers, a librarian, an office worker, and a student.[12]

In general the parents took an active interest in their children's activities and achievement in school. Mothers, and often fathers, too, came to open houses, parent–teacher conferences, student performances, and social events. A number of parents made visits to the classroom to share special activities with the children, and several mothers volunteered to help on a regular basis. They became actively

involved in the literacy program by typing and binding the children's published books. Most parents supported the program by encouraging and providing materials for children's expanding literacy initiatives at home.

Sometimes parents took initiatives of their own to support or supplement school instruction. The mother of a boy who had shown little interest in writing or publishing for most of the kindergarten year, spent the spring school vacation helping him write and publish three books at home. Other parent efforts were less complementary to the school's approach to literacy, however. Luke's mother bought reading workbooks for him, and another mother had been systematically teaching her daughter to read using phonics since well before kindergarten. Both were aware of the difference between Mrs. Benedict's methods and their own, but they did not express overt dissatisfaction with her approach. Nevertheless, their perception of the need for explicit teaching of reading skills indicated a certain level of tension with the invisible pedagogy of the classroom.

In general parental tensions about the literacy program surfaced around the issues of word recognition skills and conventional spelling. Again, it was not that parents objected to the methods or results of the invisible pedagogy. In end of the year interviews with me, most parents expressed unqualified satisfaction with their children's progress in reading and writing. The least positive assessment came from Luke's mother, who said she had expected more but thought he was doing fine. Parents often commented favorably on qualities the pedagogical approach sought to nurture, such as children's self-initiated engagement in reading and writing and their willingness to take risks. Such comments came even from parents who saw their children's reading and writing skills as less developed than those of their peers. The mother who had sponsored the home publishing during school vacation attributed her son's confidence and pride in reading and writing to Mrs. Benedict's approach to literacy instruction.

Yet some parents also made it clear that the kind of skills emphasized in traditional literacy instruction were important to them. For example, although most indicated that they encouraged their children to invent spellings when they were writing at home, only one mother expressed fascination with how her son figured out spellings, while several commented on the places where their children's spellings diverged from conventional spellings. Jane's mother's attitude was perhaps the most openly ambivalent. She had encouraged Jane's invented spelling all year at home and was pleased at her daughter's increased risk taking, but she also said, "She still doesn't spell them right....I think sometimes she could do better myself, but I don't say anything." Another father, commenting on his daughter's invented

spellings, said, "She better give that up fast." He and his wife asked me if phonics rules were taught later in this program and expressed their belief that children would not learn spelling regularities unless they were explicitly taught.

Parents showed few tensions around the play-centered nature of the literacy program, though occasionally the idea of a distinction between work and play appeared in parent comments. Both Jane's mother and the mother who taught her daughter to read at home reported telling their children that school was not just for fun, that they also needed to work. In the case of the second mother, this statement was coupled with an injunction to choose the writing area more often during children's choice time.[11] In both instances parents' definitions of work seemed to involve activity that was not perceived as immediately gratifying to the child but would bring long-range benefits. Parents did not specifically invoke respect for adult authority as the justification for engaging in such activity.

In general the parents of this group of children appeared to experience more tensions around issues of competency than of authority. For the most part they accepted, at least for young children, the integration of work and play in the invisible pedagogy and valued the personal qualities it nurtured in children. But they also valued the explicit skills taught in visible pedagogies. This is consistent with Bernstein's description of the interests of the professional middle class and his belief that it is the issue of the skills required for qualifications which puts these parents in conflict with invisible pedagogies. Such conflicts and tensions were muted during the kindergarten year,[11] perhaps because the demand for qualifications was so distant, but their presence speaks to the intersection of class-based orientations toward work with beliefs about appropriate pedagogies.

As Luke and Jack, Beatrix and Jane entered the kindergarten classroom for their first day of school, they stepped into a larger social world that was in many respects continuous with the worlds of their families in regard to language and literacy practices. Their teacher had designed a physical and social environment in which to foster and support children's literacy learning as part of interesting, meaningful activities, in much the same way children had already acquired knowledge of literacy at home. Under the assumptions of the emergent literacy and social construction of literacy perspectives, the conditions were ideal for the children's literacy learning to proceed smoothly. Yet the discussion of family reactions to the classroom literacy program suggests that continuity, as well as discontinuity, between community and classroom may be marked by tensions—in this case for parents, around class issues. A discussion of how similar tensions may be experienced by teachers is deferred until the end of Chapter 5.

For much of the next two chapters I will focus on tensions in the children's literacy learning in the classroom and examine the reasons why their learning often did not proceed as smoothly as predicted by the emergent literacy and social construction of literacy perspectives. These reasons, again, have to do with the larger social context of pedagogy and learning and the relations that are being constructed in and through literacy in the classroom.

ENDNOTES

[1] To signal the parallelism of the individual learning biographies and this class history, the text of the narrative description of the first day of school is distinguished from the surrounding discussion by setting it in the same typeface as the learning biographies in other chapters.

[2] The "Author of the Week" activity is described more fully in Dinan (1977).

[3] The "Letter of the Week" activity is described more fully in Benedict (1984). Only consonants that frequently occurred at the beginning of words were featured as letters of the week, and the 'week' often stretched into several weeks as activities around a particular letter expanded. The labels 'consonant' and 'vowel' were never used, nor were the letters 'sounded out.' Teachers simply pointed out the similar sound at the beginning of words that started with a particular letter.

[4] Studies by Willis (1977), Everhart (1983), and Apple and King (1977) have described traditional school curricula in Britain and the U.S. as having the characteristics of visible pedagogies.

[5] See Walkerdine (1984) for a provocative discussion of the educational use of Piaget's developmental theory as a form of social control.

[6] Willis (1977) makes the point that in the middle-class professions, workers are not paid for their time but for what they are—their skills, capacities, general potential. He also notes that lower-level 'white-collar' work is not really distinguishable from manual labor in its essential character as alienated work, though the surrounding ideologies may differ. Alienated work, following Marx, is that which is outside the control of the worker.

[7] Urwin (1985) and Walkerdine (1985) examine different aspects of the construction and consequences of this role definition for women.

[8] Bernstein bases his reasoning on the greater access to knowledge that invisible pedagogies may give to working-class children, but he does not see these pedagogies as altering the basic class structure. Giroux (1987), on the other hand, does see transformative potential in invisible literacy pedagogies like those described in this chapter, provided their theoretical base is extended to include a larger social analysis.

[9] Few studies describe the lower middle class, though Everhart (1983) defines "working class" so as to include what might be considered lower-middle-class occupations, for example, clerical, skilled manual or technical work, and retail sales. His brief description of parental views of education fits the working-class characteristics described here.

[10] Urwin (1985) describes how the mothering practices of this group have become normalized as the standard for effective parenting.

[11] Street and Street (1991) argue that the family literacy practices of the professional middle class have been 'pedagogized,' that is, adapted to conform to the values and practices of schools.

[12] Three of the employed mothers were single parents.

A different sort of tension around work issues surfaced within the school system, where some teachers reportedly believed this literacy program put "pressure" on children for literacy development too early. One teacher was quoted as finding it "cruel" to expect young children to write by themselves instead of tracing and copying letters. These views reflect pedagogies which sharply distinguish work and play and define school work as teacher-imposed activity. They do not allow for the incorporation of literacy into play and reflect the belief that young children are incapable of initiating and regulating their own literacy activity.

Conflicts became more pronounced in the following years in a few cases where children did not perform well on standardized reading tests and parents chose to move children to classrooms in which traditional forms of literacy instruction were practiced.

chapter 4
Children's Orientations Toward Literacy in Kindergarten

This chapter and the next present the learning biographies of the four children introduced in Chapter 2—Beatrix, Jack, Luke, and Jane, following in detail their growth as readers and writers during their kindergarten year. The biographies are constructed to highlight the consistent patterns we saw in the ways the children participated in classroom literacy events. Referring to these patterns as orientations toward literacy, rather than learning styles, is meant to signal their social origins and purposes. These origins and purposes are considered by examining how children's participation in literacy events at home (as described in Chapter 2) was connected to their participation in literacy events in the classroom and how the children responded to the pedagogical expectations and social relations of the classroom. The discussion of how children's literacy learning involved defining themselves and others in relations of gender and work links the analysis of local social relations to a larger social world.

The use of biographies in this way, to link individual experience to a larger social world, has not been common in research on beginning literacy, even though studies focusing on individual children have been abundant. An examination of how studies of individual children have been framed within the theoretical perspectives on beginning literacy sets the stage for a reconsideration of the sources of individuality in the learning biographies.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE INDIVIDUAL LEARNER

Case studies of individual children's learning became a standard approach to research on beginning literacy with the advent of the emergent literacy perspective. Using the model of psycholinguistic studies of children's oral language development (e.g., Brown, 1973;

Slobin, 1986), researchers sought to discover patterns in children's literacy development through in-depth observation of individual children over time. Initially, such studies were conducted by parents in the home and broadly documented the literacy learning of a single child (e.g., Baghban, 1984; Bissex, 1980; Soderbergh, 1971). Despite the focus on the individual, however, the goal was to identify developmental universals in the order and process by which children acquired knowledge about written language. Studying the individual learner intensively was a way to gain insight into specific knowledge and processes that were believed to be part of a developmental unfolding little affected by context.

As case study research on beginning literacy moved into the classroom, studies were often narrower in focus than those conducted in the home. Researchers followed children for shorter periods of time and attended to the situated dynamics of particular aspects of literacy learning rather than to more global phenomena (e.g., Bissex, 1984; Dyson, 1983; Edelsky, 1986; Sowers, 1979). Again, the reason for studying individual children was generally to identify developmental universals that were viewed as unshaped by instructional context, though learning might be inhibited by contexts that did not allow children to manipulate written language in accordance with developmental principles.[1] Case studies of individuals were often used to document the learning that occurred in literacy programs based on the developmental assumptions of the emergent literacy perspective (e.g., Allen, 1988; Avery, 1985; Sowers, 1979; von Reyn, 1985).

Two studies within the emergent literacy perspective are notable for their long-term, relatively comprehensive attention to children's literacy learning in the classroom and for their interpretive focus on individuality. Bussis, Chittenden, Amarel, and Klausner (1985) followed the reading development of 40 children for 1½ to 2 years beginning in their kindergarten through second-grade year. While their analysis describes common patterns in children's development of knowledge and orchestration of that knowledge in the act of reading, it also gives considerable attention to individual variation which is attributed to "personal learning styles." These learning styles are defined as stable patterns involving "how individual children approached and engaged the people, activities, and materials in the classroom; how they organized and presented their ideas; and, more generally, how they seemed to perceive the world" (p. 147). The source of learning styles is not analyzed, although it is briefly suggested that they are determined by personal choice, biological make-up, and the particular organization of an individual's knowledge. Despite the authors' stated belief that meaning is contextual, and despite the

diversity among their participants in race, class, and gender, there is no suggestion that learning styles might be related to social and cultural context.

In the second study, Wells (1986) followed 32 children from the ages of 1 to 10, collecting language and literacy data in both family and school contexts. His analysis emphasizes universal patterns in the nature and sequence of language development, but also highlights the individuality of learners. He attributes individual variation to differences in the children themselves, such as personality, learning style, and general learning ability, and to differences in their environments. Environmental differences are seen as primarily affecting the amount of experience children have with oral or, especially, written language, rather than the character of that experience. Although Wells examines the role of gender and social class in relation to the differences among children, the fact that he does not find consistent patterns within social groups leads him to conclude that individual circumstances are more important than differences among social groups. Thus work from the emergent literacy perspective generally views individuals within the framework of cognitive universals and interprets individuality as idiosyncrasies attributable to personality traits or environmental and intellectual deficits.

Studies within the social construction of literacy perspective emphasize instead culturally based variation in beginning literacy learning. Individual case studies have been a mainstay of research from this perspective as well, but here the focus has been on studying individuals as a way of identifying common patterns of learning within communities. Many studies have followed young children's learning about language and literacy over time within families as a means of uncovering the community's literacy and socialization practices (e.g., Heath, 1983; Miller, 1982; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Not many studies of classroom literacy learning from this perspective have followed individuals closely over time, but they, too, have been oriented toward discovering patterns in social interaction and the functions of written language within the classroom community (e.g., Braig, 1986; Himley, 1986) or toward identifying how children's learning may be disrupted by disjunctions between community and classroom literacy practices (e.g., Michaels & Foster, 1985; Trueba, 1988). Research from the social construction of literacy perspective has, in general, been little concerned with examining individual variation within communities.

Within the social construction of literacy perspective, studies by Gundlach et al. (1985) and Dyson (1985a, b, 1987, 1990) are notable for

their use of individual case studies to address the issue of individual variation. Gundlach and his colleagues report case studies of individual children's literacy learning in both family and classroom contexts and describe how children's learning was rooted in their evolving roles in long-term relationships within particular families and classrooms. Their analysis thus considers individual variation to result from the distribution of roles and the negotiation of power within communities; but even though they frame their discussion with references to work on cross-cultural diversity, their interpretations of their case studies rely on psychoanalytic rather than cultural formulations of the relational dynamics in families and classrooms.

Dyson's work over the years has moved toward an integration of emergent literacy and social construction perspectives and has consistently attended to the individuality of children's learning. In an early analysis of individual differences in kindergarten children's writing, she questions whether to attribute the differences she observed to cognitive styles or environmental input, the kind of interpretive choice posed within the emergent literacy perspective (Dyson, 1985a). Later, in analyzing individual differences in second graders' participation in the sharing of writing, she attributes the differences to children's social intentions and their relationships with peers in the classroom (Dyson, 1985b). Another discussion of first and second graders' writing development proposes an explanation of variation based in a model of orchestrating the multiple symbolic and social aspects of writing within the immediate situational context (Dyson, 1987). And in a recent report based on several years' observation in a single classroom for kindergarten through second grade children, she looks beyond the local social dynamics of the classroom itself and locates sources of individual variation in the experiences of children within their home cultures (Dyson, 1990). While her work thus moves toward an increasingly social explanation of individuality and argues the need to understand the stories of those who have been excluded by virtue of their nonmainstream status, there is little consideration of the larger social dynamics through which exclusion is produced and how those dynamics might be experienced by individuals. Thus within the social construction of literacy perspective, individuals have been framed by cultural patterns and individuality has been described as socially constructed in the local dynamics of interaction within families and classrooms.

Although the literacy as social status and identity perspective suggests the need to consider the role of broader social relations in the lives of individuals, individual case studies have not been widely used to examine early literacy learning within this perspective. This may

be due, in part, to the general assumption that young children are not yet actors in a larger social arena. For example, studies by Dyson (1985b) and Phinney (1989) examine how children negotiate their social status and identity within the classroom in literacy events, but no connection is made to a broader social context. In another study Edelsky (1986) considers the role of racism and ethnocentrism in the educational assumptions and policies governing the instruction of linguistic minority students, but she does not describe the students as acting within the same social relations that shape the school. And Erickson (1987) uses data from Piestrup's (1973) study of first grade reading instruction with African-American students to construct a scenario whereby early pedagogical miscommunication due to cultural differences prevents the establishment of the kind of trusting social relations that are necessary for successful learning and school achievement. In each case, there may be a chain that ultimately links status and dominance relations in the larger society with children's literacy learning in school, but the links are not considered to be visible in everyday classroom transactions. And in no case are the students themselves viewed as making choices that define their status and identity in a world larger than the classroom.

Notable exceptions to this pattern include Ogbu's (1985) description of the formation of oppositional cultural identities by young children from subordinate minority groups, Trueba's (1988) discussion of how linguistic minority students internalize their teachers' perceptions of their intellectual limitations, and Steedman's (1982, 1985) and Walkerdine's (1985) analyses of young girls' language and literacy as responses to their present and future social positions. Several studies by McDermott and his collaborators (Hood, McDermott, & Cole, 1980; McDermott, 1976, 1978; McDermott & Gospodinoff, 1979; Varenne & McDermott, 1986) are also important for their use of individual case studies to examine the dynamics of inequality in children's literacy learning in and out of classrooms. This work has been especially concerned with the social construction of 'success' and 'failure,' which are required by and supportive of present relations of status and dominance in American society. Varenne and McDermott (1986) describe their work as demonstrating that these larger social dynamics are implicit in the details of everyday life, "that institutional and cultural constraints are intimately lived" (p. 191). In calling for research methodologies that link social structure to intellectual development, McDermott and Hood (1982) argue that biographies of individuals can reveal how patterns of behavior over time are socially organized and maintained. Thus there is grounding in the literacy as social status and identity perspective for a vision of individuals,

including young children, as framed by relations of status and dominance and of individuality as resulting from the negotiation of one's position in such relations.

It is this vision of the play of broader social relations in the lives of individuals that underpins the discussion of children's learning biographies in this and subsequent chapters. The goal is to link social structure and intellectual development by documenting the patterns in children's behavior over time and considering how those patterns are connected to relations of gender and class in the larger society. By closely examining the children's literacy behavior in its immediate social contexts of family and classroom, the biographies allow us to see how children's choices both reflect and create their social relations and identities within these local worlds, but within a larger world as well. The close examination of individual learning from this perspective also allows us to build a more complex understanding of the social sources of individuality, one which does not depend upon group homogeneity in behavior but upon the variable negotiation of social relations within and across groups.

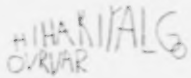
We begin, then, with the learning biography of Beatrix, a child whose orientation toward literacy was well matched with the literacy program in Mrs. Benedict's kindergarten. Beatrix's integration of reading and writing into her play through story making and her risk taking and self-reliance in solving problems fit well with her teacher's child-centered, play-oriented pedagogy. She is the kind of child teachers and researchers might describe to illustrate the success of a literacy program which is based on the theoretical assumptions described in Chapter 3. However, it is important to consider whether the smooth course of Beatrix's literacy learning in the classroom was due to a pedagogical approach that supported 'natural' language learning or to the particular social relations in her family around literacy and the particular identity she was already constructing for herself as a reader and writer. The full importance of these social aspects may only become apparent following the biographies of Jack in this chapter and Luke and Jane in the next, because they reveal tensions in children's literacy learning that I argue have their sources in the construction of social relations. The question is not whether this was or was not the 'ideal' pedagogy, nor whether the children were 'prepared' by their families for literacy learning, or even for the literacy program they encountered in this classroom. The question is how children's entry into the pedagogical world of the classroom is constituted and mediated in the complex interplay of social relations past, present, and future.

BEATRIX

When Beatrix began kindergarten, making and sharing stories through drawing, print, talk, and books were already an important part of her play. In the kindergarten classroom her interest in story-making found expression at meeting time and in the writing area. When a topic connected to her own experience, Beatrix became a storyteller, narrating her experience with dramatic voice and gesture. In addition to writing two or three times a week for teacher's choice, she chose writing at least twice a week for children's choice. She enjoyed working with her friend Beverly and talking animatedly about what they were both doing, but she did not mind writing alone.

The first day of school Beatrix drew a picture in her journal of a man rowing a boat, wrote some letters next to her drawing, and finished with her name at the top of the page. She said the man was saying, "Go away, clouds. These are rain clouds. Help, I'm sinking." The next day she dictated a story to go with a painting she had made. She showed me her painting and said, "If you see the story, it tells what he says." She pointed to the words as she recited, "Hey, who turned out the lights? Hey, I want to get out of here." Although Beatrix referred to only the writing as "the story," in fact her story was represented in the composite of picture and print. She used written language in both cases to record the dialogue that was part of the dramatic scene portrayed in her drawing.

The second week of school she and Beverly both drew pictures of apple trees and people in their journals, and Beatrix wrote long, wavy, overlapping strings of letters which again represented dialogue, "Hey, I think I'll go over there and have a little piece. Oh, no, I can never go to another person's house and never go to any person's house." Two days earlier she had drawn a similar picture, dictated almost identical language for Mrs. Gundersheim to write, and read it back following the words with her finger. She did not copy her earlier piece, however, nor was her language like Beverly's; she laboriously recreated her previously dictated message by sounding out the words and inventing spellings. It begins:



Hey, I think I'll go
over there

The repetition of similar content and language over several days was a pattern in Beatrix's early writing, though she seemed not to recall it but to recreate it out of topics that were on her mind. From the end of September until the middle of October, there were many drawings of school buildings with lots of people. One day she continued to work on her writing even as

Mrs. Benedict began to read a story to the class. She said the words slowly to herself, listening to the drawn-out sounds; but she got discouraged and quit, telling me that she couldn't do what she wanted it to say. Three days later she drew a similar picture and asked Mrs. Gundersheim to write for her. Her teacher suggested she think of something short to write by herself. Beatrix talked about her picture with her teacher, then wrote a descriptive label for her drawing:

SKILYA LISNIEN — school with lots of people

Three days later under another school drawing, she wrote by herself:

This is a school and this school has a lot of people
and this school has a tree.

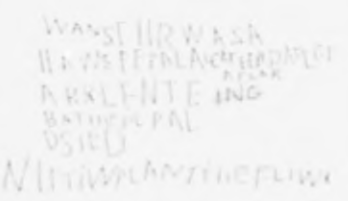
In the process of slowly sounding out words, Beatrix did not read what she had already written and sometimes lost track of what she wanted to write or where she was in transcribing it. Whatever frustration she felt in inventing spellings, though, she tolerated; she could not tolerate more structured writing lessons. Mrs. Gundersheim did a directed drawing and writing activity one day with a small group of children, telling them how to spell, "Now is the time to pick apples." Beatrix enjoyed the modeling for drawing one of her favorite pictures, an apple tree. But the writing instruction obviously frustrated her; she wanted to do it her own way. She completed the activity by drawing a person at the bottom of the page because, in her words, "someone needed to pick the apples." Beatrix worked hard at her own play in writing, but she either modified assigned activities to suit her interests or completed them perfunctorily.

Although Beatrix knew that 'real reading' required attention to print, her major strategy for making sense of written messages was interpreting pictures. On the first day of school she thought the snack chart said "apples" because of the picture over the calendar. One day in the library area, she told graduate student researcher Jean McClellan that she couldn't read; when she was asked how people read, she began sounding out the title of the familiar book *Corduroy*: s-o-r-d-r. In a reading activity with a repeated sentence pattern under similar pictures, she tried to make a connected story of the pictures. Following "The man is looking at the monkey" was a picture of a man the text described as looking at a mirror. Beatrix read, "The man is going to get the monkey to jump through the hoop."

In both reading and writing, Beatrix's focus on meaning and story drove and sometimes superceded her attention to the formal conventions of written language. The print awareness survey Mrs. Benedict administered in October confirmed that she had well developed concepts about books and print as well as a primary focus on comprehension. Of a page on which the print consisted of geometric shapes, she said, "It bothers the person who's reading. The wagon and the other words can't get through and it doesn't make sense."

In late October and early November Beatrix went through a period of writing words in her journal that she could spell conventionally on the basis of visual memory. She wrote the alphabet several times, and *mom*, *dad*, and family names. She told Mrs. Benedict one day that she didn't like sounding out words because she forgot what sounds to write. She was writing often with her friend Beverly, who was very concerned about correctness in her own spelling.

When Beatrix finished her first journal in the middle of November, Mrs. Benedict gave her the choice of beginning a new journal or a storybook in which she would work on a sustained piece of writing. Beatrix chose the storybook. On the unlined paper of her journal, her drawings had dominated the page and her writing had accommodated to the constraints of available space. The lined paper in the storybook with blank space at the top helped her organize her writing. She drew her pictures at the top and wrote on the lines. She was sounding to spell more quickly and easily and wrote:

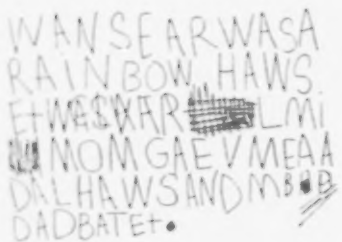


Once there was a
house. People lived in it. The
people
are planting a flower.
But the people
decided
not to plant the flowers.

Although she now wrote in a narrative mode, she did not continue a story over more than a single writing period. Each day throughout December she began anew, "Once there was a. . . ," and sometimes she just drew or wrote the alphabet and numbers. She seemed to be practicing conventions of genre and transcription without linking them to her strong sense of storytelling.

Beatrix's growing confidence about the details of print was apparent in classroom activities. When Mrs. Benedict asked if any word starting with *N* would be "November," Beatrix responded, "N-O, no." But in reading stories, her increasing attention to print seemed to make her uncomfortable. She had been listening to a record of *The Three Little Pigs* and read the text with Jean McClellan afterward, obviously following the print as well as using pictures to remember the story. She corrected her miscue "bundle of wood" to "bundle of sticks," for example, and was frustrated at trying to sound out *three* using the sound *t* at the beginning. But when Jean told her she was reading, Beatrix said that she just used these, pointing to the pictures.

During January and February Beatrix continued to write story leads that didn't turn into stories and occasional transcriptions of familiar songs with musical notes in the picture space. She had difficulty reading back her writing, and at Mrs. Benedict's suggestion she began to read while she was writing. By early February she was matching her voice to the print in reading her writing, and she began making revisions as she read. When she couldn't read what she had written, she erased it. One day she wrote:

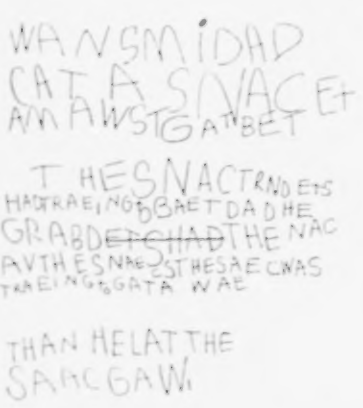


Once there was a
rainbow house.
It was very colorful. My
mom gave me a
doll house and my
dad bought it.

She shared her piece at the authors' circle that day, adding vivid details in response to questions. She said that it was not a true story but that her doll houses had given her the idea. Mrs. Benedict responded that it sounded like it really happened, a comment that may have suggested to Beatrix the idea of writing directly about personal experience.

During the next month Beatrix occasionally began pieces that seemed to be autobiographical, for example, "Once there was a bus and I was on it. I was going to a friend's house." On the same day in early March that Mrs. Benedict shared a true story she was writing about her cat Mimsy, Beatrix

wrote about her bird and her sister's dog. Two weeks later she began a true story about a snake that, with Mrs. Benedict's encouragement, she worked on for several days and published:



Once my dad
caught a snake. It (he)
almost got bit.
The snake turned its
head trying to bite Dad. He
grabbed the neck
of the snake 'cause the snake was
trying to get away.
Then he let the
snake go.

Beatrix's oral description to Mrs. Benedict of catching the snake was more detailed than what she wrote, but she had brought her spoken storytelling into her writing. With a lived-through experience in mind, she was able to integrate her drive for story and her growing transcription skills.

Similarly, Beatrix was now able to sustain attention to print in reading a familiar text. She began reading one day with Jean McClellan from memory:

Text: A bee is going to a flower
to get some honey.
Two more bees come to get
some honey.

Beatrix: Three bees went to get honey. One bee went
to get honey and two and three came, too.

Asked to point as she read, she began again, "A bee is going to a flower to get sō-mē." In response to her pause, Jean repeated what Beatrix had read, asking what the bee might be going to get. Beatrix replied, "Some collen." Jean asked what "collen" was, and Beatrix said, "Honey. I meant to say honey." She explained that "collen" was "what's in a flower" and she knew this was "honey" because "I saw the H and the N." She had achieved voice–print match on a familiar text, attending to both print and meaning.

Beatrix was very observant about the conventions of print at this point and connected them to her personal experience. While cooking during "R

week" in March she said to Mrs. Benedict, "Guess what? My mother makes something that starts with R—rosettes." And later while writing, "You know what? It's 'R week' and I'm writing about something that starts with R and ends with an R—the river." When asked about the hyphen she used to break a word at the end of a line, she told Mrs. Gundersheim she had seen it in a book her mom was reading at home.

In April Beatrix read an unfamiliar text with increased attention to voice-print match. She worked to achieve accurate word recognition, sometimes with exaggerated sounding out, but never at the expense of making sense. For example, she read the following:

Text: I was working with a rake. (picture shows girl raking leaves)
Beatrix: I was hoeing? hō, I think that's hoeing, wō-th', woth a r-ā-k, I was raking leaves, raking leaves.

She abandoned several sentences when she could neither achieve voice–print match nor arrive at a meaningful substitution. When asked how she read, she said, "You gotta know what it's about." Beatrix's approach to text always involved making a connection between print and personal meaning. The connection was made when she was interested in the content.

By the end of April Beatrix was writing with ease, still relying on sounding to spell but with more conventional sound–letter correspondences and more consistent spacing between words. She sustained personal narratives over several days, sometimes revising what she had written the day before. Drawing was no longer central to her writing; her pictures illustrated the written story instead of being an integral part of it. When she was interviewed about writing, she said that writing was fun and she was a good writer, that she wrote to remember things she didn't think she would be able to remember. She said, "Sometimes I write about what I know about and sometimes I just think up what I'm going to write." This statement marked a turn to writing fiction.

At the beginning of May Beatrix started a piece of realistic fiction that she shared at the authors' circle:

WANS A FANLY
PLANTED A TREE
NAD NACST EAR
A NAHR TRE
WEL CAM THE
NACST DAE

Once a family
planted a tree
and next year
another tree
will come. The
next day

they plant-
ed a apple
tree
to eat the
apples and
make juice out
of them.

She said she was going to add to her piece, and after several days it became an episodic story about a family selling apples and juice which was published as *The Apple Story*. Beatrix continued to fill storybooks with long pieces of realistic fiction, returning to personal narrative for her third published book about her visit to one of the first-grade classrooms. Her mother said she was constantly writing at home. In addition to writing stories, she competently took telephone messages.

By the end of May Beatrix was quite successful at "real reading" and confidently labeled herself a good reader in the reading interview. Of her strategies for handling something she didn't know, she said, "Sometimes I just skip it, or I sound it out and if I can't sound it out, then I skip it. Then the stuff in front kind of gives me an idea so I say what I think it is." Reading with Jean McClellan, she skipped just a few words which a combination of context, pictures, and sounding did not give her. She often reached the correct word or made a meaningful substitution by using the pictures or context after attempting to sound out, as shown in the following example:

Text: Pete had a kite that flew high above the trees.
Beatrix: Pete had a kite that flew "h-hug", high a-dove", above the trees.

She told Jean she thought it was "high" because "kites do fly high."

Her mother said Beatrix was reading up to 120 words a night in books like *Charlotte's Web* and *The Black Stallion* before her mother took a turn in the bedtime reading. She said that, to Beatrix, "Printed matter is supposed to make as much sense as spoken." They always talked about what they had read, and Beatrix regularly asked about the meaning of words she didn't know. Her father reported that she chose her own books and refused to read a book her mother had selected. She also exercised her independent judgment about spelling conventions, asking about the word *through*, "Why they got a G in it? You don't say it." Beatrix received

item on the print awareness survey in June. She read most of the story herself except where distortions of the print made it impossible. She was very articulate about the conventions of print, describing how a question mark differed from a period: "You say it kind of strange. This makes me say it different like you don't know something." Her attention to the conventions of print did not interfere with comprehending the story; her retelling was as complete as it had been in October.

The orientation toward literacy that Beatrix brought into the kindergarten classroom was fully compatible with her teachers' pedagogical assumption that children learn to read and write by taking risks to figure out how meaning is represented in texts that are interesting and meaningful to them. Since stories were Beatrix's play, she was intrinsically motivated to read and write stories. From the beginning she connected spoken and written voice by writing dialogue to accompany the dramatic scenes represented in her drawings, but it was in the writing of personal narrative that she found story content she could sustain and transcribe in print. These stories were representations of the experiences that were personally meaningful to her. Both these experiences and her enjoyment of storytelling were clearly rooted in family activities and her parents' support of her explorations of print.

Beatrix's participation in classroom literacy events was guided by her intrinsic interest in stories and her family's ways of relating to her. She enjoyed social interaction through and about stories, but only as long as it served her own purposes. She seemed to see herself as an equal participant in these interactions, whether with peers or adults. She had things she wanted to say, and she listened as long as the conversation was of interest to her. She also drew on ideas from others when they met her purposes. But her immediate focus in reading and writing was not socially oriented. She did not read or write to please others or to meet their expectations but to please and satisfy herself.

This was apparent in March when she brought a piece of writing about her vacation to the authors' circle. She read, "In my summer house there is a firemouse and a wasp. I saw the footprints of the firemouse." She displayed the picture and announced that she wanted comments. Mrs. Gundersheim asked, "No questions?" Beatrix shook her head. Everett immediately asked, "Why's there a firemouse?" Beatrix responded, "I don't know why, but it *is* going into my mom and dad's bedroom and under my mom and dad's bed," deflecting the question and turning to her own topic. Mrs. Gundersheim reminded the group that Beatrix didn't want any questions. Roberta phrased her question as a comment, "I wonder how the firemouse got in." Without much interest, Beatrix said, "Maybe it just went through a hole."

Another question from Luke—"What's a firemouse?"—she ignored, even when he rephrased it as a comment. A series of questions and comments revealed that Beatrix had not seen the firemouse and had heard the name from friends. Everett, still confused by the name, wondered if she was going to add that the fire engine came. Beatrix said curtly, "No, it didn't," then with more animation, "I'm going to add more to this, and it's going to be about it losing its toe. We had a trap for it and it losed its toe."

For Beatrix, the primary relationship was always between her and the text. She was satisfied only when she had made personal sense of written messages, and her strategies were always directed toward that goal. Thus her persistence in working out the formal conventions of print was self-sustained and inner directed because written language was relevant to her life and part of her play in the form of story telling. This is not to say that her approach to texts was not social in origin; it had clearly been nurtured by her family's ways of handling stories and of relating to Beatrix.

There was little conflict or tension around literacy for Beatrix in Mrs. Benedict's kindergarten, not only because there was continuity between home and school in literacy values and practices, but also because Beatrix's identity as a reader and writer did not put her in conflict about gender or work relations. She treated literacy as self-initiated and self-regulated activity which served her own purposes, and she worked hard at her play in literacy events. She did not expect or appreciate adult or peer control of her activity. When literacy became adult-sponsored work (as in the directed writing activity), Beatrix withdrew her energy or reasserted control. She seemed to expect work and play to be integrated and responded to lapses of integration as misunderstandings rather than as impositions of legitimate adult authority.

Moreover, Beatrix's sense of initiative and agency in literacy activities was uncolored by any apparent tensions around gender issues. Her sense of her own power and of the power of literacy seemed outside the bounds of any gender divisions that might mark literacy, or some literacy practices, as female. She was as engaged in writing as in reading, and her topics and genres were based on experiences that she shared with both her mother and her father. The fact that both of Beatrix's parents were fully engaged in her literacy activities in mutually supportive ways may have contributed significantly to her pursuit of a wide range of self-defined purposes in reading and writing. Her uniqueness among the girls in this regard will be revealed by the later biographies of Jane and others.

Despite the apparent middle-class homogeneity of the community served by the school and the evidence of family practices that are

generally believed to support literacy learning in school, very few children experienced as little tension as Beatrix in the kindergarten literacy program. Very few children came into the classroom with orientations toward literacy that allowed the smooth progress predicted by the emergent literacy or social construction perspectives. In a real sense few children found themselves as 'at home' in the classroom as Beatrix did, not because of cognitive or cultural gaps, but because of their ways of defining themselves and others in literacy events. Jack's kindergarten learning biography provides an interesting contrast to Beatrix's, because his orientation toward literacy led to ways of participating in literacy events that were in tension with the pedagogical expectations and social relations of the classroom.

JACK

Jack entered the kindergarten classroom with interests in active play with peers and in pleasing his teachers by doing what they said. Literacy was part of the second domain. Jack treated reading and writing as mechanical tasks done cheerfully and quickly to please adults, but written language was not part of his play. Thus he was not disposed to engage in the risk taking and problem solving that were his teachers' goals. In the classroom Jack's play interests took him to the drama area whenever he had a choice. There he engaged in dramatic story making with the large blocks, constructing cars, vans, and motorcycles for adventures with his peers. His play was always social and he liked to be 'in the driver's seat.'

When journals were introduced on the first day of school, he drew a shape he described to the teacher as a "big fish," and printed his first name. When Mrs. Benedict asked if he wanted her to write "big fish," Jack said he already had. She asked what else he could write, and he attempted three versions of his brother's name with the letters in varying order. He saw no reason to repeat his drawn message in spelling, and he apparently used visual memory, without reference to sound, to guide his spelling of his brother's name.

A week later he brought another drawing of a large, sprawling shape to Mrs. Benedict and told her he didn't know how to write "shoe." As she told him the letters, he wrote *S* without assistance, and she showed him the rest of the letters on the alphabet chart. He wanted to label a second drawing "gate." Mrs. Benedict showed him G on the alphabet chart and asked what else he heard. He responded "A" and "T" and wrote them, asking if *T* was "a line up with a dot." When Jack went to the writing area for teacher's choice, he drew simple shapes, did no writing until he conferred with a teacher, then labeled his drawings with teacher support in spelling.

There was a striking difference between Jack's participation in literacy

events with adults and with peers. One day he asked the intern how to spell a word, and she told him to write what he heard. He made an attempt with the help of another child, but after the first letter he said, "I don't wanna write that," and quit. His discomfort at trying something he wasn't sure of with adults was apparent. But the same day he went to a tablet in the drama area, wrote some letters, and told another child it said "store." Then he asked me if I knew what it said. When I asked him what it said, he responded somewhat sheepishly that he didn't know. Asked what he wanted it to say, he said "store." Asked what he had written, he named the letters he had printed: EOFA TOAN.

It was the beginning of the second month of school, a month in which Jack wrote only with teacher support in the writing area but began to take risks and develop confidence in writing with peers in the drama area. Early in October he wrote his full name for the first time to make a license plate for his camper. Another day he asked me how to spell "Frederick" because he was making a bill for fixing a customer's car. As I repeated the name slowly, Jack and his friend Arnie figured out together how to spell it—FRADREK. Early in November Jack was overheard saying to a friend, "I like writing. I'm getting better at it."

From the beginning of kindergarten Jack was attentive to signs in the classroom and focused on their meanings for organizing social activity. He quickly developed strategies for using the sign-up board, first finding areas by the pictures next to the print and then remembering their sequential position in the list. One day he read the snack chart as "cake" instead of "celery and dip," using expected meaning and perhaps initial letter as the basis for his prediction. Before the class meeting one day he and Arnie searched a chart matching children with activities to find out what they would be doing.

In the library area Jack focused his attention on pictures. He went through a simple picture-label book one day, naming the pictures but ignoring the print even when he had trouble identifying the animal in the picture. When the print awareness survey was administered late in October, he showed understanding of concepts about books but not about the organization of print. He knew where to begin reading, for example, but the appearance of geometric shapes instead of letters did not seem inappropriate to him. His retelling of the story read by the teacher showed that he had understood it. Jack did not see himself as a reader and did not pretend to read, although he enjoyed stories and books.

The first week in November Mrs. Benedict read Bill Martin Jr.'s *A Ghost Story* to the class with the lights off, the blinds closed, and the children crowded close around her. They all jumped at the end and then denied being scared. In the next weeks, Jack and many other children sought out that book in the library area. Jack was also encouraged to follow the print and participate in reading signs and books in individual interactions with

teachers. Early in December, when Mrs. Benedict asked the children to share a book with a friend, Jack gave a dramatic rendering of *A Ghost Story*, following the print with his finger and approximating the text from memory. His friend jumped at the end and delightedly asked him to read it again. Jack proudly repeated his performance. He was beginning to think of himself as a reader, especially in the context of play with peers.

Following Jack's announcement that he was getting better at writing, he began to attempt more complex drawings and messages, momentarily forsaking neatness and order. In the middle of November he filled facing pages in his journal with a sprawling, colorful drawing and printed letters around it in the available space. Asked what he had written, he said, "The ball is rolling down the grass and a boy dropped a pot of gold." It appeared that he had attempted to represent the sounds of the words, although no one observed his behavior or the sequence in which he wrote the letters.

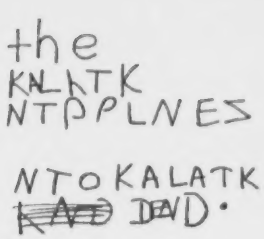
Early in December he drew another sprawling picture which he described to Mrs. Benedict as a mountain that was having a blizzard. Since he seemed puzzled about where to write, she asked him if he would like her to make lines for him to write on. He said yes, so she turned the page and drew lines. Saying the words slowly and consulting his friends about letters and sounds, he wrote:

AMNT HEVE
ALR.

A mountain is having
a blizzard.

He shared his piece at the authors' circle that day, the second time this occasion for sharing writing with the whole class was offered. He answered questions happily and appeared quite pleased.

Jack's drawing and writing underwent a remarkable transformation early in January when he brought his favorite play activity into his writing. He drew a recognizable airplane and several cars, all within the unlined picture space on his new lined paper, and wrote:



The

Cadillac,

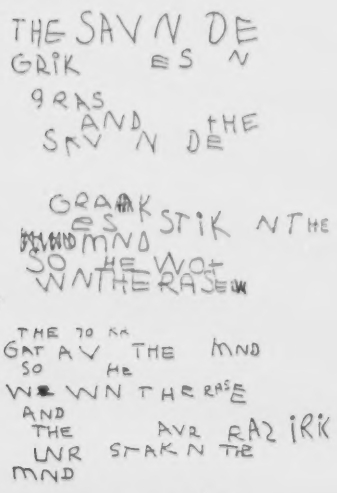
and the plane is going to crash

into the Cadillac.

The end.

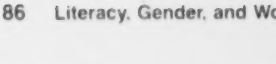
But it wasn't the end. For the first time Jack sustained a topic and continued writing about the Cadillac and the airplane for several days, conferring with his teachers about his story and consulting with his friends about spelling. We learned from his mother that he was writing similar material in a journal at home. He seemed to have found his topic and reported to Mrs. Benedict one day that writing was fun.

At the end of January Jack wrote his first complete story, called "The Seventy Truck":



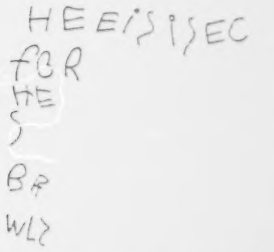
The seventy
truck is in
a race
and the
seventy
truck
is stuck in the
mud
so he won't
win the race.
The seventy car
got out of the mud
so he
won the race
and
the other race trucks
were stuck in the
mud
and he (shouted hurray)
'cause (he passed) the finish line.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



So he won the
race before the others
and he lived happily
(ever after).
The end.

When his teacher asked how the truck was able to get out of the mud, Jack wrote:



He used a stick
for
his

back
wheels.

He indicated where that sentence should be inserted when his story was typed for publication. Later Jack read his published book shyly to the class and proudly took it home to read to his family. The social occasions of both authors' circle and publication were important to Jack's motivation to write and his perception of himself as a writer because through these activities his writing earned him the attention and interest of his peers.

During January Jack was a confident reader of familiar patterned books. When he was invited to read, he always chose books he had heard frequently and had already practiced with a teacher. He attended to the print, reading word by word, relying on memory and pictures to reconstruct the text. His substitutions often preserved meaning with little connection to the graphic cues, for example:

Text: One little bear went to the airport to see the jets.
Jack: One little bear gone to the airport to see the airplanes.

When the text was unfamiliar, however, he struggled with persistence but not much success. He read a new text with a teacher in February, using the pictures and initial letters but guessing words with little regard for syntactic or semantic appropriateness. He read the following sentence with an ending intonation that clearly questioned his reading:

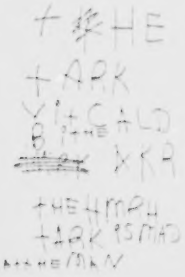
Text: Pat put Happy in her wagon.
Jack: Pat puppy happy is happy?

But when his teacher suggested that she finish reading the story, he said, "I can read it." Jack's determination did not inspire his confidence,

however, but a deliberate plodding through the text. He wanted to complete what he perceived as the adult-assigned task rather than abandon it.

Jack's confidence in his writing made written language a comfortable and practical tool for him outside the writing area. One day in February the class made hoe cakes, George Washington's favorite breakfast, for snack. The next day Jack asked Mrs. Benedict how to make them so he could tell his mother. She suggested he write down the recipe, and he wrote it in his now recognizable invented spellings as she dictated. He also volunteered to write the snack chart by himself, rendering "juice and waffles" as GOS AND WfLO.

In his journal and storybook writing his focus on vehicles expanded to include boats with his usual themes of competition and conflict. A typical entry from early April read:



The
shark
got killed
by the
anchor.
The hammerhead
shark is mad
at the man.

With the exception of a few memorized conventional spellings, Jack depended on sounding to spell, but he did so easily and quickly. He occasionally had difficulty reading back what he had written, though, especially work from previous days. When Jack was interviewed about writing at the end of April, he said he wrote because his mom and his teachers told him to, that he would go to the drama area all the time if he could choose. But he also said that writing was fun and that he was a good writer.

By May Jack was more successful at reading back his writing, even noting errors and omissions in his text and correcting them as he read. Although he often sustained a writing topic over several days, his pieces did not hang together into coherent stories, and he sometimes read related pages in the reverse of the order in which he had written them. Authors' circle and publication were less important to Jack now, probably because his best friend Arnie was tense about competing with Jack as a writer and was boycotting the authors' circle. But the writing process itself remained filled with social interchange. For example, one day in early June Jack worked on a piece he had begun the week before in which the main character competed in a number of "cathalon" events. He wrote MAK WAN, audibly sounding "Mike won" as he wrote. Then he asked Arnie

what he should make for his next page. Arnie suggested, "Who can make the biggest building," an idea Jack returned to after they had brainstormed several others. He interrupted his drawing moments later for a discussion of the *-ing* ending Arnie had just written. In similar interactions over the following days Jack added more events to the "cathalon"—including tooth brushing and Pac-Man—which Mike won in a clean sweep. *Mike's Competition* became Jack's second published book.

Jack continued to choose to read familiar, highly patterned texts that he was sure he could read. With unfamiliar text he attempted to use picture cues to help decipher the text, sometimes successfully, for example, in April:

Text: Then I saw a butterfly.
Jack: Thing I saw a butter (pause, looks at picture) fly.

But primarily he attempted to sound words out or guess with little attention to meaning, and he skipped whole lines and pages of this text which he found difficult:

Text: I sat a while.
Jack: I saw a w-a-r

Text: I thought a while.
Jack: ----------

Text: And then
Jack: And then

Text: I set them free.
Jack: I said lit-tle fried.

But Jack's practice with familiar texts provided the basis for a growing knowledge of written language. His increasing control of the reading process was apparent in June when he read an unfamiliar text with Jean McClellan, successfully integrating use of pictures, repeated syntactic patterns, and initial letters. He did not overtly sound out words or skip sections of text, and he made frequent meaningful substitutions, for instance the following:

Text: A snake has his home in the grass.
Jack: A water snake has, has a home in the garden.

His mother reported that he was reading successfully at home, looking at pictures, making good guesses, sounding out, "putting it all together."

When she pointed out to him that the text said something different than he had read, he said that it was the same idea.

Jack's performance on the print awareness survey improved greatly from October to June. He was more knowledgeable about the organization of print, objecting to the appearance of geometric shapes and recognizing the need for spaces between words. His increased attention to the print distracted him from the story, however, and his retelling was less complete than in October. When Jack was interviewed about reading, he described sounding it out and asking for help as his only reading strategies. He said reading was fun, that he read lots of times because he wanted to when he had nothing else to do. Asked if he was a good reader, his response was an emphatic yes.

In contrast to Beatrix, Jack's orientation toward literacy was not initially compatible with his teachers' belief that children learn to read and write by taking risks to figure out how meaning is represented in texts that are interesting and meaningful to them. Jack's literacy behavior was motivated primarily by his perception of its social risks and rewards. He expected adults to give him explicit directions and to provide solutions to his problems. When his teachers asked him questions or encouraged him to solve his own problems, he seemed to feel frustrated and incompetent. He saw literacy interactions with adults as inspections to see whether he could follow orders, and he wanted to pass. Written language was not part of his self-initiated play but adult-sponsored work to get finished before play. His participation in classroom literacy events with adults was consistent with his experience around the family homework table.

In play with peers, however, Jack was engaged and confident, taking risks to give a good performance or participate in mutual problem solving. Thus it was through peer interaction as part of his play in the classroom that Jack became an explorer of the conventions of written language. It was in the drama area that he began to 'act' like a writer and take risks in representing personally meaningful messages. And it was when he brought his play interests into the writing area and began to share his writing with peers that his writing there started to flourish. In reading, it was a dramatic reading performance, modeled by his teacher but imitated with peers, that fostered Jack's perception of himself as a reader. His development of strategies for encoding and decoding written messages depended on regular opportunities for socially rewarding performances of reading and writing. Jack's relationships with texts were largely determined by his relationships with people; he valued reading and writing for the social interaction they engendered. This, too, was consistent with the way he participated in family literacy events like story reading.

For Jack, Mrs. Benedict's pedagogy raised certain conflicts and tensions around literacy, partly because of some specific discontinuities between home and school literacy practices. Jack's participation in the family homework table had contributed to his treatment of literacy as work initiated and regulated by adults, done to serve their purposes rather than his own. Work and play were quite separate for Jack, especially where literacy was concerned.

The difference between family and school literacy practices may be relatively insignificant in itself, however. More important is the way children come to define their investments in literacy in relation to their construction of identity and social relations within their families. In Jack's case, gender and work relations appeared to intersect in his orientation toward literacy as an activity whose meaning was in the connection it offered to his brothers and the recognition of competence it brought from his mother. In the classroom, initially Jack was not able to make meaning in either of these ways, but as literacy became part of most classroom activities he began to use literacy as a way to connect to peers. And as he became more sure of his own competence he looked less for adult direction and praise, even though he continued to treat interactions with adults as tests of his competence rather than collaborative problem solving. That his kindergarten teachers were female may have inhibited any greater change in his relations with them. This question is considered more fully in Chapter 7, when Jack's interaction with his male first-grade teacher is described.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILDREN'S ORIENTATIONS TOWARD LITERACY

The learning biographies of Beatrix and Jack highlight the ways in which the orientations toward literacy that children had constructed at home influenced and were influenced by their responses to the play-centered, invisible pedagogy of Mrs. Benedict's kindergarten. Although Beatrix was initially more oriented toward literacy as play than Jack was, both ultimately found classroom situations where the playful manipulation of written language served their own goals, and both joined in social interactions that engaged them in problem solving focused on print. These occasions were characterized by attention to meaning, high risk taking, flexible problem solving, and enjoyment, the ideal conditions for learning according to the assumptions of Mrs. Benedict's pedagogical approach.

When literacy activities were more highly controlled by teachers, both Beatrix and Jack approached them with less attention to meaning, risk taking, flexibility, and enjoyment. Beatrix tuned out or altered such assignments; and although Jack welcomed them, they tapped his motivation to please the adult taskmaster rather than master the task. To say that the children treated such activities as work, as I have done earlier for Jack, is to assume a definition of work which excludes the characteristics of playfulness. It would be more accurate to say that the children treated such activities as alienated work in which they had no personal investment.[1] The difference in their responses to such situations suggests that in the process of constructing identities they were already positioning themselves differently in relation to orientations toward work that grow out of and feed into class and gender divisions. At least where literacy was concerned, Jack was inclined to accept the relations of alienated work, while Beatrix was inclined to resist them.

The fact that Jack came to treat literacy as his own integrated work and play in some contexts demonstrates the negotiability of such positions. That is, to the extent that children reconstruct social relations in new ways within the classroom, their orientations toward literacy, as well as their identities in regard to gender and work, may change. But it is important to note that Jack accomplished his transformation within the boundaries of certain identity parameters. The social currency of literacy activities remained primary for him; he used literacy performances as a way to connect with male peers and to display competence. The change in Jack's orientation toward literacy involved, first and foremost, a redefinition of the kind of activity literacy was and only secondarily a redefinition of the kind of person he was.

The learning biographies of Beatrix and Jack depict children's action and interaction within a pedagogical context that is believed to support children's 'natural' language learning abilities and inclinations. Pedagogy in this context becomes 'invisible' in Bernstein's (1975) terms, as teachers strive to create conditions that encourage children's play with written language and then to coach children's learning through responsive social interaction. By the theoretical assumptions described in Chapter 3, such a pedagogy allows children's growth to proceed according to universal developmental principles. But Jack's learning biography shows that we cannot take for granted that children will 'naturally' thrive in play-centered, invisible pedagogies, as Beatrix's biography might be taken to imply. For the conditions of learning in such pedagogies require that children define

literacy as a particular kind of activity and that they relate to adults in particular ways in literacy events.

Definitions of literacy and of social relations are implicit in all pedagogical approaches, but have not generally been considered important to children's learning in the classroom. Yet in the process of negotiating social relations and constructing identities within their families, children formulate orientations toward literacy that may be incompatible with the pedagogical assumptions and social relations of the classroom. Such incompatibilities may significantly alter children's opportunities for learning. Reconstructing their positions in social relations to adapt to the classroom culture goes to the very core of children's ways of seeing and being in the world. Even if we believe that such positions are not determined once and for all, that they are constantly being renegotiated in our everyday social encounters, we should not underestimate the tensions and conflicts that are involved in the process. These tensions may be formidable regardless of whether the outcome of negotiation leads to change or not. The learning biographies of Luke and Jane in the next chapter highlight the extent to which such tensions permeated some children's participation in literacy events in Mrs. Benedict's kindergarten.

ENDNOTES

[1] It is important to note that some researchers (e.g., Dyson, 1983; Edelsky, 1986) identified significant individual variation within broad developmental parameters, and that, under the influence of the social construction of literacy perspective, the developmental principles of the emergent literacy perspective came to include patterns of social interaction as well (see Edelsky, 1986, for a discussion of these changes).

[2] In this and subsequent instances I have followed the conventions of linguistics by using slashes to indicate phonological representations of pronunciation. Within the slashes I have represented sounds by following familiar dictionary conventions rather than using standard linguistic symbols.

[3] In this and subsequent instances, I have used parentheses to indicate transcription based on the child's reading of the text rather than on the text itself.

[4] King's (1983) study of school children's definitions of work and play suggests that kindergarten children do not initially define work as excluding enjoyment but come to do so over time as a consequence of school experience and exposure to adult norms. Her kindergarteners labeled any required activity as work, regardless of their feelings about doing it, and called self-chosen and self-directed activity play. Her analysis focuses on the reproduction of the dominant ideology but does not consider class dynamics or the intersection of class and pedagogy. She describes the population of her study as middle class, and her description of classroom practices suggests a largely visible pedagogy. Since I did not elicit children's definitions of work and play, I cannot say how they would have labeled their activities. My analysis is based on observations of differences in how they treated various activities.

It is also relevant to consider the ways teachers labeled classroom activites. In King's study teachers explicitly labeled some activities as "work" and some as "play." These words were rarely used in Mrs. Benedict's kindergarten, although a child's effort might be acknowledged with the remark "good work" or "nice job." Activities were always referred to by more specific labels such as "writing," "reading," "cooking," or "painting."

chapter 5
Tensions in Children's Kindergarten Literacy Learning

This chapter examines the literacy learning of two children—Luke and Jane—whose biographies showed persistent tensions throughout the kindergarten year. The sources of these tensions are located in the dynamics of constructing social relations in the classroom, given the children's existing orientations toward literacy. Explanations linking individual experience with relations of gender and class have not been common in the literature on beginning literacy, where the analyses of conflicts and tensions in children's literacy learning have been framed by the assumptions of the major theoretical perspectives on beginning literacy. A brief discussion of these analyses sets the stage for a more detailed consideration of the tensions in Luke's and Jane's literacy learning.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON TENSIONS IN LITERACY LEARNING

Drawing on theories of cognitive development, research within the emergent literacy perspective has usually focused on sources of cognitive conflict in literacy learning, either within the processes of reading and writing themselves or between the child and the curriculum. Studies such as those of Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) and Bussis et al. (1985) describe the kinds of choices children must make in managing the multiple dimensions of complex knowledge systems and processes that cannot be immediately mastered. Other researchers, like Harste and Burke (1980), Dyson (1984a), and Wells (1986), use individual case studies to document the difficulties children can have when teachers' instructional assumptions and practices are not consistent with the child's present knowledge and ways of constructing knowledge. In both lines of thinking, the tension arises because

demands are made on children's knowledge systems or cognitive processes that exceed or conflict with their present capabilities.

Research from the social construction of literacy perspective generally draws on theories of culture and social interaction to explain conflicts and tensions in children's literacy learning. Sources of conflict are attributed to cultural differences between family and school literacy practices, to the social organization of instruction in ways that lead to interactional tensions and conflicts, or to the need for children to manage multiple social demands within classroom literacy events. Studies of cultural difference (e.g., Heath, 1983; Jordan, 1984; Michaels, 1986) focus on patterns of conflictual interaction between teachers and children from particular groups as a result of differences in language, literacy, and socialization practices. Work on the social organization of instruction (e.g., Borko & Eisenhart, 1989;, Collins, 1986; Eder, 1982, McDermott, 1976, 1978; Moll & Diaz, 1987; Piestrup, 1972) describes the dynamics of reading lessons in which reading is constantly interrupted by behavior management, conflicts over turn taking, and negative evaluations of student performance.[1] And studies of social interaction in the classroom (Bloome, 1990; Dyson, 1985b, 1987) emphasize peer communication practices that students must learn to orchestrate in relation to teacher–student communication practices in literacy events. Tension and conflict, in all of this work, result from the presence of competing social agendas in classroom literacy events.

Expanding the interpretive framework to include theories of social reproduction, research within the literacy as social status and identity perspective has located sources of tension in the status and dominance relations of the larger society. Although studies within this perspective have not often had literacy learning as their primary focus, several address tensions which impact on literacy. Ogbu (1985), for example, explains social conflicts between teachers and students from low-status minority groups as forms of student resistance based on distrust of the school, and Trueba (1988) sees the psychological tensions experienced in school by students from low-status and refugee groups as a result of the way they are treated in the classroom as well as the way they have been treated outside of school. Hood et al. (1980) and Varenne and McDermott (1986) claim that tensions they describe in family and peer interactions around school literacy are linked to definitions of success and failure and their role in relations of status and dominance. All of these formulations imply that tensions are experienced almost exclusively by members of low-status groups as a result of intergroup conflict.

In their analyses of class and gender relations, however, Connell et

al. (1982) and Walkerdine (1985) argue that tensions permeate the whole system of status and dominance relations.

> Both class and gender are *historical* systems, riddled with tension and contradiction, and always subject to change. Indeed it may be better to think of them as *structuring processes* rather than 'systems', that is, ways in which social life is constantly being organized (and ruptured and disorganized) through time. What is most important to grasp about them is their dynamics, the ways in which they exert pressures, produce reactions, intensify contradictions and generate change. (Connell et al., 1982, p. 180; emphasis in original)

Thus, from this point of view, schools, families, and even individuals are not internally consistent in their values and practices, but incorporate multiple and often contradictory values and practices. We saw in Chapter 3, for example, how the middle class families in this study valued both the risk taking nurtured in Mrs. Benedict's invisible pedagogy and the accuracy emphasized in traditional visible pedagogies. This internal heterogeneity[2] and the constant negotiation of status and identity through social interaction mean that tensions and conflicts are woven into the fabric of everyday social life.

The learning biographies of Luke and Jane in this chapter describe sustained tensions in their literacy learning that are not predicted or fully explained by the emergent literacy or social construction perspectives. In contrast to Beatrix and Jack, their literacy learning did not proceed smoothly in the classroom despite their considerable knowledge of print, their families' support of literacy learning, and a literacy program that was based on developmental assumptions and culturally appropriate practices. Although the patterns in Luke's and Jane's behavior could certainly be attributed to individual styles of managing the tensions in mastering complex cognitive and social systems (as in Bussis et al., 1985, or Dyson, 1987), such an explanation offers little insight into the sources or meanings of the choices children made. The discussion in this chapter seeks to find those sources and meanings by locating the tensions they experienced in the dynamics of constructing social relations and identity. In addition, tensions in the teacher's realized pedagogical practice are explored for their contribution to the dynamics observed in classroom literacy learning.

Both Luke and Jane entered the classroom with orientations toward literacy that made it difficult for them to participate in literacy events in the way expected in a play-centered pedagogy, especially when literacy events involved interaction with adults. Gender and work relations are identified here as a source of conflict for both, creating tensions that were not as easily resolved as Jack's because of differences in the social relations involved. Luke's learning biography

contrasts with Jack's because, despite their shared definition of literacy as an adult-directed task, their relations with adults and peers around that task were quite different.

LUKE

Luke began kindergarten with a strong interest in play activities involving space and hero/monster themes and an aversion to any activity directed by adults. He was perpetually playful and anticipated, even mischievously courted, adult disapproval of his play. In the classroom Luke was primarily interested in the blocks area, where he constructed space vehicles and acted out space wars with peers or by himself. In the writing area his journal was a stage for physical action, his body never still as he drew pictures of space and monster conflicts accompanied by appropriate noise making.

The first day of school Luke filled the first page of his journal with a bold drawing, then printed his name in the upper left corner. He described his picture to Mrs. Benedict as smoke going down a chimney and a person who wants to get in but can't open the door because the monster on the other side has the key. Mrs. Benedict asked if he wanted her to write that down, and Luke said no. The next two days he incorporated print into his drawings by putting *S*'s on Superman's shirt and the letters UEA on the spaceship Superman was fighting. Over the next weeks, he occasionally dictated sentences to be written by a teacher, added apparently random letters to his drawings, or copied print that was visible in the classroom or that a teacher had written at his request. Writing that was not an integral part of drawing he treated as an unpleasant chore.

Interactions with teachers which encouraged attention to sounds and letters were strained and revealed what appeared to be limited knowledge. One day after Luke described his drawing to Mrs. Benedict, she asked him what he wanted her to write about it. He said, "Luke Skywalker fell in the drain." She asked him what he heard at the beginning of Skywalker, and he responded "S." As she continued writing, he identified the *d* in *drain* as a *p*. Luke added to his dictated description, "He went in the ship." When Mrs. Benedict wrote *ship*, she asked what made the /p/ sound. He told her to write it down, and he then identified it as a *P*. Luke would fidget during such interactions, rubbing his eyes and edging away from the teacher. But in self-initiated play he revealed greater knowledge of letters and sounds. When the class had rolls shaped like a *B* for snack one day, Luke said his roll was a *3* and then an *I* as he changed its shape by eating. And one day in October he wrote iMD inside the mouth of his drawn character to show him saying, "I am mad."

Luke summed up his attitude about writing one day when he said he was going to make Star Wars and asked his companion if he was making

"one with words on it—the word kind." When Mrs. Benedict asked him how people would know about his picture, which was not the "word kind," he said he would tell them about it. When he did include words, they were often unrelated to the content of the drawing, as when he copied TO E and VOLUME from the tape recorder near him and said he had written "tape recorder" on his drawing of Superman. Even though his teachers tried to link writing to his interests by focusing on his drawn story and spoken description, Luke treated writing as a visual artifact required by teachers, not as a vehicle of expression or communication. And his general response to adult requirements was boredom or insurrection. Observing his apparent lack of interest in writing, his teachers continued to show their interest in the stories expressed in his drawings and periodically engaged him in conferences focused on expressing his stories in writing.

Luke's interest in print in the classroom was strong when the print connected to his play; for instance, he was very possessive of signs a teacher had written to label his block space towers and vehicles. His interpretation of print relied primarily on pictures and context. When Mrs. Benedict held up a box of shape manipulatives with "Tangrams" on the label and asked what the children thought it said, Luke responded, "shapes." On the print awareness survey, Luke showed knowledge of basic concepts about the organization of books but little awareness of the specific organization of print, including left-to-right orientation and letter knowledge. He attended to the story, however, and his comprehension was good.

In general Luke's attention to books depended on his interest in the subject matter. The second day of school he brought in his pop-up edition of a Star Wars book and interjected frequent comments as Mrs. Benedict read it to the class. Two weeks later, as his teacher described school library procedures, she suggested that if they had had a book for 3 or 4 days, they might want to bring it back. Luke volunteered, " 'cause I would be bored." He was not bored, though, when Mrs. Benedict brought in her copy of a different Star Wars book the following week. He listened raptly as she read, asked whose book it was, and was surprised at the answer. When she stopped the day's reading at a midpoint in the story, he did not want to leave the book. He sat and looked at it by himself, then announced, "The ending will be excellent." Luke was always surprised and a little chagrined when the literacy activities that interested him also interested his teachers. He was more comfortable playing the rebel.

During November Luke continued to copy print from the classroom when asked to write on his own. In conferences with teachers he began to represent his own messages by listening to sounds as a basis for spelling. One day in November he wrote about his drawing with Mrs. Benedict:

THeD&RNESYKE The dragon is walking.

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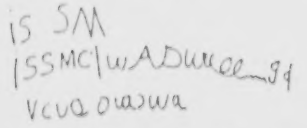
She spelled *the* for him. He heard the /d/ and /r/ sounds but did not know what letters to use for them without assistance. He came up with *N* and *E*; and Leo, listening in, provided the *S*. Luke figured out the *YKE* spelling for *walking*, first offering letters without apparent thought, then muttering appropriate choices to himself.

Early in December he sat next to a friend who was sounding out "the big monster." Luke wrote, this MMDR, next to his drawing of a huge figure, apparently copying *this* from another page and borrowing from his friend's sounding of *monster*. He told Mrs. Benedict that he was going to write, "This monster is gonna break this whole stone in half," and he made lines to write on, inspired by the lines that she made for another child. He continued saying what he wanted to write—"is, is, is"—and wrote is on the next line. He kept repeating what he wanted to write from the beginning—"This monster is..."—and asking adults what he had already written. He added an *M* on the basis of a false cue from Jack before he was done writing for the day. It was the only self-initiated and self-sustained attempt to write a message that Luke made that month, though he wrote several complete messages with a teacher by his side sounding and spelling words with him. Luke thus began to participate with more engagement in the social activity of writing with adults and occasionally with peers, but he seemed to have little confidence in his own resources as a writer.

Although Luke's responses to books continued to focus on pictures, he began to see himself as a reader. Early in December he held up a simple text and told me, "I know how to read this." Asked if he would read it to me, he told the story to the pictures, taking care to match the remembered content to the appropriate picture. He looked for another "short one" he could read and read it the same way. He had read both stories recently with a teacher, and appeared to enjoy this opportunity to perform for an adult audience of his choosing.

During January and February Luke produced elaborate drawings in his journal but little writing. Although he occasionally made lines to write on, he chose unlined paper for his second journal, leaving his drawing space unconstrained. He often used Ed Emberley books as models for drawing. Early in February, opposite an Emberley modeled giraffe and pig, Mrs. Benedict got him started by writing "There was" as he dictated. On his own, he continued:



He said that he had written, "The giraffe was walking and the pig was walking." Many days he successfully evaded interaction with a teacher and

wrote nothing. He occasionally shared at the authors' circle, however, one time making up a story on the spot. Whatever Luke's reasons had been for his earlier participation in writing as a social event, his purposes now led him elsewhere; and it seemed that making a game of evasion was often his purpose.

His interest in reading became more overt and social, however. Although the blocks area was still his most frequent choice of activity, Luke also chose the library area, where he would recruit adults to read to him. He frequently came to school with a book, dittos he had done at his afternoon school daycare program, or something that began with the letter of the week. One day in January he chose a familiar, patterned text to read with Mrs. Benedict. He relied on memory and pictures to reconstruct the story, and even when he was reminded to point to the words, he paid little attention to graphic information. He was concerned that his reading make sense, however. For example, he read:

Text: One little bear went to the airport to see the jets.
Luke: One bear went to see the airplane go up.

Text: Then two little bears were left at home.
Luke: Now two bears at home, were left at home.

A month later a teacher asked Luke to read an unfamiliar text about a day at the circus. After talking with him about what was happening in the pictures, Mrs. Gundersheim requested that he look at the words and see what they said. Luke approached the print hesitantly, attempting to use initial letter cues as well as pictures and his sense of story, but many words were provided or prompted by Mrs. Gundersheim, as in the following:

Text: They gave the tickets to the clown.
Luke: They went
Teacher: It begins with G.
Luke: they g , they g gave the clown
Teacher: What letter does it begin with?
Luke: T
Teacher: What sound?
Luke: t , they gave the t
Teacher: What are they giving?
Luke: tickets, they gave the tickets to a clown.

With his teacher's direction, he worked to decipher the print without abandoning his sense of story. Just as two months earlier he had participated in writing messages with his teachers, he now joined them in cooperative reading interactions. Again, these social activities did not foster Luke's confidence in his own resources as a reader. He seemed to

attribute the problem-solving work of reading to the adult and see himself as a playful respondent, especially when he did not choose the text.

Suddenly March brought a virtual explosion in Luke's writing. Following an unusual self-sustained attempt to sound out what he wanted to write one day, he explained his difficulty in reading it by saying, "I keep on forgetting what I was going to say so I keep on writing two things." Another day when he had written four lines of apparently random letters under his drawing, Mrs. Gundersheim told him that other children did not already know how to spell everything they wrote, they just wrote the sounds they heard. She repeated the words he wanted to write as he figured out sounds and letters and wrote:

TO PEL RST I N 9INA MTN.

Two people are sitting on a mountain.

When he finished, Mrs. Gundersheim told him that he could do that by himself. Luke looked up at her skeptically and responded, "But you were nodding your head." It was his first doubtful acknowledgment that he was becoming a writer.

The next day Luke returned to a topic he had written about earlier that week and, over 2 weeks, expanded it into a published piece called *The Monster Town*. He wrote steadily, sounding to spell without a teacher's nodding head. For example, one day he wrote:

WS THR WS A MSDR. HE WSKR HE WIL WIIG O TO ASK BN. A HE SI K W NTO HNSFRWA TNTHR HE WIII GOTO ANDLND

Once there was a monster. He was scary. He will go to scare people. He is going to tornado himself away. He will go to another land.

As he worked on this story, he conferred frequently with teachers, but he did so with the demeanor of a writer eager to share his work and get help with his problems. The finished piece reflected one of his favorite themes of monster conflict, full of the adventure action of his dramatic play but lacking a coherent storyline.

Luke's overt attention to print in the classroom also increased during March and April. Early in April he looked at the schedule to see if writing was one of the day's activities. He read "Writing" as "math"; and when Mrs. Benedict suggested he compare the word with the sign in the writing area, he objected, "But *writing* starts with R." The same day he read an unfamiliar text with Mrs. Gundersheim. He frequently attempted to use graphic cues as his first strategy, but if he was not successful he made predictions based on pictures and storyline, as in the following:

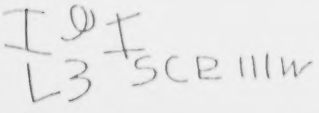
Text:	Carol and her mother went to the store.
Teacher:	There's something happening in the picture. What do you see happening in the picture?
Luke:	They're going to a store.
Teacher:	That's right. Now let's see what the words might tell us. That girl, by the way, her name is Carol.
Luke:	Carol and, Carol and, Carol and her mom to the store.
Teacher:	You said, "Carol and her mom to the store." Does that make sense?
Luke:	Carol and her mom is going to the store.

He was interested in the story, asking questions to clarify what was happening; but he yawned as his teacher encouraged attempts to make closer voice–print match with the text. As he became increasingly restless, Mrs. Gundersheim offered to finish reading the story while he followed along. After the reading session, he told Mrs. Benedict he was tired because "it was very long"; but when she asked about the story, he performed an animated retelling.

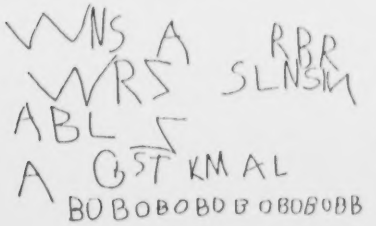
Luke's earlier energy for the social activity of reading was waning; and even when his interest in the story was strong, it did not inspire sustained engagement in problem solving about print. In March when graduate student researcher Jean McClellan asked him about his preferences in reading material, Luke indicated comic books because, he said, "Everything's easy, nothing's hard." His teachers faced a dilemma because even when Luke's own motivations led to print, he chose to focus on pictures and treated their focus on print not as assistance in meeting his own goals but as adult-imposed work to be resisted. They continued to look for opportunities to respond to Luke's interest in written language, and

occasionally initiated interactions to provide the demonstrations from which they thought he could benefit.

After the publication of *The Monster Town*, Luke wrote several pages under the title, "The Mountain Climber." He read this piece to Jean McClellan late in April with obvious concern for voice-print match, stopping on one page with the explanation, "That's all 'cause I don't know what these (pointing to print) are." This was the only piece of writing he sustained for the rest of the year. Some days he drew elaborate pictures and wrote story titles like THE BANDIT. Other days he wrote random letters, letter-like forms, or pretend cursive under his pictures:



Only infrequently did he attempt to encode a complete message in spelling, like the following:



Once a robber
was stealing
apples.
A ghost came along
(and said) boo.

Luke's mother reported that he did a lot of drawing at home but little writing. He liked to play word games that required spelling, though, and had been very pleased with his published book. He was learning to speak and write the family's language of origin in another script, which might have prompted his experimentation with forms of writing. When he was interviewed about writing, Luke did not give elaborate answers. He said that he wrote stories, "monsters, scary ones," and that he was a good writer and liked to write "because it's fun!" What Luke didn't say but made clear by his behavior was that he didn't write at all unless he found a way to make it fun.

On the same April day that Luke read his mountain climber piece to Jean McClellan, he chose from her books an unfamiliar text to read. He began reading word by word with pauses and glances at her; but after the first sentence he abandoned any attention to the print, creating a story to go with the pictures. When she talked to him about his reading, Luke said he sounded out his own writing and used the pictures in the book. When he read with her again in mid-June, Jean selected a text she thought he could probably read. She began reading and he shadowed her, then

continued to read by himself with considerable attention to print. He worked at achieving accurate voice–print match and meaningful language simultaneously, perhaps because this text appealed to his curiosity about animals. For example, he read:

Text: A snail has his home
on his back. (picture of snail on a branch)
Luke: What's that called? A snail has its, his home
on a branch. Is that true, that they have it
on a branch?

His mother said that he wanted her to point to the words as she read to him at home and would read cereal boxes by himself. She wanted him to have workbooks "like his other school," where, she said, "he's up to sentences and pictures." The more traditional approach of Luke's afternoon program and his instruction in the family's language of origin certainly reinforced his definition of social interactions involving literacy as adult-sponsored work. It seems unlikely that Luke was a receptive participant in hierarchically structured lessons, however. His own purposes for reading continued to be tied to his interest in the content. In the reading interview Luke said he read books, stories, and his journal—at writing time, at home, in the car. He said he liked to read "to know what they [books] say." And despite the fact that he was anticipating the interview questions by reading them upside down, he said he was "not that good" a reader. He missed only two items on the print awareness survey—the question mark and quotation marks. His understanding of the organization of print had grown markedly since September, even if he did not fully acknowledge his competence and often chose to rely on pictures. When reading appealed to his own motivations, Luke used everything available, including adults, to decipher text.

Luke's orientation toward literacy led to social interactions with his teachers that cast them at cross-purposes. Even though his intrinsic approach to written language was as meaning-focused play, his perception of reading and writing as adult-sponsored work put him in conflict with teachers in literacy events. He acted the part of the 'artful dodger,' playfully resisting adults who encouraged attention to print. He often appeared to enjoy the gamesmanship in these interactions, getting the adult to provide most of the information or finding a strategy like copying that met the perceived demand with minimal energy. Even when Luke co-operated with his teachers in reading and writing, he seemed to see them as doing the work instead of himself. Without adult direction, he engaged happily in what he perceived as play—expressing stories in his drawings and finding stories and

information in the pictures of books. This pattern was consistent with Luke's participation in literacy events with his mother at home.

Nevertheless, almost in spite of his efforts to resist, Luke's play led him to become more involved with texts. His self-initiated attention to print increased thoughout the year, always when the print connected directly to his interests—space adventures, monsters and superheroes, animal lore. Reading and writing were fun for him when he considered them easy, and they were easy when they engaged his sense of play. His way of playing with adults through resistance, however, made it virtually impossible for his teachers to join with him in collaborative problem solving about print. Such interactions were most productive when Luke initiated them, but those occasions were rare indeed. And, unlike Jack, Luke's focus on written language in his play with peers was also rare, perhaps because his sisters took on the literacy-related aspects of play at home.

In fact, however, Luke apparently learned more than his teachers realized from his interactions with them, since the strategies he adopted in his self-initiated reading and writing were those demonstrated by his teachers. Because of the way he defined himself in his relations with others and his own attraction to quick action, he rarely used his full range of literacy knowledge and strategies; but by the end of the year it was apparent that he knew a great deal about written language. His relative freedom to pursue his own play interests in classroom activities was certainly instrumental to this growth, as was the pervasive presence of written language. In addition, his biography leaves the impression that, beneath his often mischievous resistance in social interactions, he was paying more attention than he was willing to acknowledge.

Luke's conflicts around literacy in the classroom represented a continuation of the way he handled identity issues within his family. With his female teachers Luke continued to treat literacy as an attempt to capture and hold him in alien gender territory. He assigned to them a definition of literacy that was inactive, difficult, and boring, but reserved a claim of his own to have fun with written language. He expected his teachers to discount his playfulness with literacy; when they responded with interest and support, he maintained the separation between work and play by assigning them a controlling interest in the activity. He thereby also maintained a separation between them and himself, or at least the appearance of one.

For Luke, his teacher's play-centered, invisible pedagogy seemed to represent a threat to the play world he had claimed as his own. The separation he made appeared to disallow any integration of work and play; Luke rarely invested the problem-solving energy in his play with written language that Beatrix did alone or that Jack did with peers.

By his own statement, reading and writing were fun when they were easy. But even though Luke defined literacy largely as alienated work and resisted it in that form, he in fact became literate and used literacy to satisfy his own curiosity and serve his own purposes. Thus Luke managed his conflicts about literacy in a manner that allowed him, in effect, to have it both ways.

Jane also had difficulty integrating work and play in her approach to literacy in the classroom; but while Luke wouldn't have anything to do with work, Jane wouldn't let herself get away from it. The caution this inspired was in tension with her interest in stories and her teachers' belief in the importance of taking risks to figure out how meaning is represented in print.

JANE

Jane entered kindergarten with a love of fantasy tales and a guardedness that seemed designed to protect her from mistakes. In the classroom she almost disappeared. She watched quietly and followed instructions promptly, unless they called for an independent decision. At children's choice time she often stood staring at the sign-up board for long minutes looking lost. She seemed most comfortable and fully engaged in art activities. If a model was offered, she worked carefully to duplicate it; but she also initiated projects on her own. Despite her love of stories, she approached classroom literacy events with great reluctance to take any initiative at all.

During writing time, Jane drew. Her first entry in her journal was a small figure of a person under a bright yellow sun. She described the drawing to Mrs. Benedict but said she didn't know what to write about it. Asked to show her teacher some of the things she could write, Jane wrote her friend's name, then her own. In the following weeks her drawings became more expansive and elaborate, with layers of design she constructed slowly and methodically. Since her teachers did not direct topic choice, Jane looked to peers. The subjects of her drawings—rainbows, apple trees, houses, space monsters—were often borrowed from the peers she silently observed, but the treatment was always her own. She wrote names or known phrases like "I love you" unless a teacher was at her side. Then she hesitantly constructed her own messages and wrote the sounds she heard, with long pauses between letters as she apparently waited for the adult assistance and evaluation she expected. At the end of September, for example, she drew a colorfully designed figure that she described to Mrs. Benedict as a space creature. She knew how to spell *he* and wrote it. Mrs. Benedict spelled *was* for her to write and told her the first letter of *in*. Jane added the *N*. Asked to write what she thought for *outer space*, she

slowly wrote OTSPAS, looking at her teacher after each letter for confirmation.

At the end of October Jane was more likely to ask for help than to wait for it. One day she approached Mrs. Gundersheim with a richly layered, multicolored drawing and said, "I need help." With her teacher at her side asking what sounds she heard, Jane wrote:

THIS IS A DS.

This is a dress.

When her teacher asked where she would wear it, Jane responded in writing:

WA.AT.FRA PRTe.

wear it for a party.

The help she seemed to need was simply adult permission to write things her own way, which Mrs. Gundersheim gave her explicitly when she told her it was okay to make mistakes. Several days later Jane wrote without teacher support until the final word:

HE.SI.SA.HI.TO A.KID

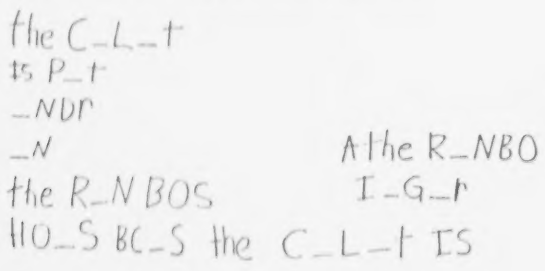
He is saying hi to a kid.

Jane's caution was also apparent in her responses to print in the classroom. Even near the end of October she still hesitated at the sign-up board, unwilling to use the picture, sequence, or initial letter cues that other children used. She explained her problem there to Mrs. Benedict by

saying that she couldn't read it. Despite her extensive knowledge of letters and sounds and some sight words, she rarely attempted to read text. When adults asked her to read, however, and waited out her hesitation, she picked up readily on repeated syntactic patterns. Early in October, for example, after her teacher read the picture-accompanied sentence, "The man is looking at the monkey," Jane easily read the next two picture-sentence pairs: "The monkey is looking at the man" and "The man is looking at the mop."

At story time Jane listened intently, often sitting right next to the teacher where she made quiet comments about the story. The print awareness survey showed considerable knowledge about the organization of books and print, including details like periods, spaces between words, and matching pairs of upper and lower case letters. Her retelling of the story was minimal, however, consistent with her general reticence and the test-like situation.

During November Jane had difficulty sustaining her newfound confidence in writing. She worked on her drawings, adding layers of detail and tracing over what she had already drawn until writing time was almost over. At the last minute she would begin to write but would stop mid-sentence, leaving her idea unfinished. One day late in November when Jane had crossed out and written over several letters in her text, her teacher suggested that she use a dash to hold the place of letters she didn't know. This strategy apparently alleviated some of Jane's anxiety about correctness because she began to write longer texts with an abundance of dashes. For example, early in December she wrote:



The cloud
is putting
thunder
in at the rainbow
the rainbow's angry
house because the cloud is

Her increased confidence in writing was apparent in her willingness to take comments when she shared this piece at the authors' circle. A week earlier, her first time in the author's chair, she had not wanted any response to her piece.

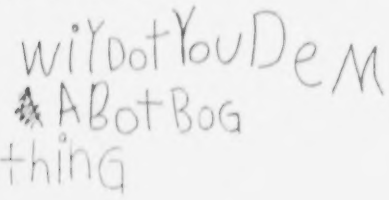
Jane no longer asked teachers to spell words for her or stopped at the first unknown, and she began to add layers of clauses to her writing, going back and forth between drawing and writing. Most days she borrowed her topics from peers and seemed to have little she wanted to say about them. For example, the previous week she had drawn a clown and a rainbow and written, "The clown is looking at the rainbow." But in the piece cited above she exercised her own imagination on the popular rainbow theme, showing a sign of developing confidence in authorship.

Jane also began to develop more confidence in reading. She often volunteered responses to classroom print at meeting time. Early in November, for example, she read "Space Shuttle" and "United States" from a picture poster discussed by the class. When Mrs. Benedict showed Jane some books she thought she could read, Jane selected *Brown Bear*, a text with regularly repeated language patterns. She took the book home with her and reported that she had read it. Jane had not abandoned her need for correctness, but she seemed more willing to believe that she could read at least some texts correctly.

Throughout January and February Jane wrote one- or two-sentence descriptions of her drawings. She was spelling more confidently on her own and using fewer dashes for omitted letters. For example, near the end of January she wrote:

This is the circus. The actors are getting ready for the circus.

A week earlier she had written *circus*, cr--s. She was comfortable using invented spelling even for items to be displayed in the classroom. Early in February she wrote a caption for her contribution to the *Frog and Toad* bulletin board:

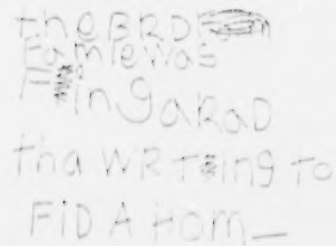


Why don't you dream about big things?

Jane was also more comfortable sharing her work with peers in the authors' circle though she did so infrequently. Early in March she brought a piece that she said was going to be interesting and asked her audience for questions. She read, "This is a alien. He does not know where he is. He is scared." Sarah wanted to know where the alien was in the picture, and Jane showed her. Another child asked if she knew what planet the alien was from. Jane said she hadn't decided that and didn't know what was going to happen to him, but she was going to think about it at home.

Jane now enjoyed reading with adults and began to attempt unfamiliar text with adult support. One day in January she chose a story about a circus even though she hadn't read or heard it before. Apparently on those grounds she told Mrs. Gundersheim she couldn't read it, and her teacher suggested they read alternating pages. When it was Jane's turn to read, her eyes were on her teacher as much as they were on the text, seeking assistance and confirmation; but her hesitant responses—based on pictures, prior context, and sight word recognition—were mostly correct. Her mother reported that Jane was quite proud about reading books by herself at school. Of her reading at home, her mother said, "She doesn't appear to read to herself—because she doesn't say anything out loud. I'm sure she reads many things—to herself. There's more inside than ever comes out her mouth."

After an extended illness in March, it took Jane a while to reestablish her confidence in the classroom. During this time she wrote little. She may also have been getting ready to turn a corner in her writing because near the end of March she wrote at the top of her page, the BRD Famle, and told Jean McClellan it was her first title. She continued in the narrative past tense, also a first:



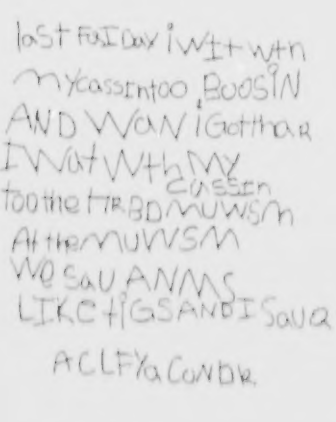
The bird
family was
flying around.
They were trying to
find a home.

Although Jane did not write complete stories, for the next month she wrote more elaborate and sustained messages about her pictures. One piece early in April included her first use of dialogue: "This is me and my brother. We are playing with our ball. 'Oh, Tom, a dog is coming. We better pick up our ball and run home. Tomorrow we can go outside and bring our ball.'"

Near the end of April Jane participated in a small group session composing a story with a teacher. She was more comfortable speaking up

intimate, collaborative group than in either one-on-one or large group interaction, where she seemed to feel more on the spot. She animatedly described her idea for the story, but expressed her opinion that George's idea was the best. In this setting, freed from the demands of transcription, she was attentive to the need for a coherent plot and cohesive language. She even volunteered to read the published version in authors' circle a week later. When Jane was interviewed about writing, she said that she wrote about things she made up. Even the realistic piece about playing ball with her brother was fiction. She said she was a good writer and like to write because at the end of the year she could bring her writing home and read it to her family.

In early May, not long after this interview and the publication of the group-composed story, Jane began working on her first piece of personal narrative about a recent family trip to Boston. Without drawing first, she wrote:



Last Friday I went with
my cousins to Boston.
And when I got there
I went with my
cousins
to the Harvard Museum.
At the Museum
we saw animals
like tigers and I saw
a California Condor.

Jane shared her piece at the authors' circle, but she did not want comments or questions, perhaps because the lived-through story was already complete in her mind, perhaps because she was cautious about revealing herself in this autobiographical genre. She worked on this piece for the next week and made it clear to her teacher that she wanted to publish it. On the same day late in May that she read the published version in a whispered voice at the authors' circle, she shared her new work in progress and asked for suggestions from the group. This piece became her second published book, *The Apple Tree*. It was realistic fiction written in the first person with a simple but complete plot. Her mother reported in the parent interview that Jane was very proud of her published books.

From early April on, Jane attempted unassisted reading of unfamiliar text when her teachers or Jean McClellan requested it. In April she looked

assistance in reading with Jean; but when it was not provided she skipped many words, studied the pictures for cues, and flipped back pages to look for previous occurrences of a troublesome word. All of these strategies led to reading that was hesitant but close to the text in both spirit and letter. For example, she read the following:

Text: I was cleaning up the rug.
Then I saw a little bug.
I caught it.
I picked it up.
I put it in a cage.
Jane: I was (pause), I was (looks at picture, skips), up the (pause, skips)
Then I saw a little (pause) bug.
I (pause) caught it.
I (pause) put it ū (pause), up (looks at adult, then picture).
I (pause) put (pause) it (pause) in a cage.

By the middle of June Jane read an unfamiliar text with fewer pauses and less reliance on skipping. Most of her miscues did not change the meaning of the text. For example, she read:

Text: Pete had a big spade.
Mary had a fat flowerpot.
But Titch had the tiny seed.
And Titch's seed grew
and grew
and grew.
Jane: Peter had (pause) a big (pause) shovel.
Mary had a (pause) flower (pause), fat flowerpot.
But Titch (pause) had the (pause, skip).
And Titch, Titch's seeds grew
and grew
and grew.

In the reading interview Jane accurately identified her strategies for handling unknown words: "I sound the words and sometimes I look at the pictures and sometimes I look at the other pages to see if it's a word I already know." She described herself as a good reader even before she was asked and said she liked to read. Jane missed only one item on the print awareness survey in June, and she read most of the text herself. She was much more forthcoming than in October, describing the functions of periods and quotation marks and giving an expansive retelling of the story.

Her mother confirmed Jane's sense of herself as a reader: "She thinks she can read now. She never picks up a book and says, 'I can't read.'"

Jane's ability to read independently did not change her love of having books read to her. She had a new interest in more complex books, especially fantasy like *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, her mother said. She also described Jane's continued hesitance in reading with adults. Of Jane's reading to her younger brother, she said, "It sounds just like me—firm, assured—she knows what she's doing and she's in charge of it. But when she reads to me, it's different. It's like you say, 'I'm the kid now, and I'm not sure, I'm not confident.'"

Jane's orientation toward literacy, like Luke's, led to patterns of participation in literacy events that were not consistent with the assumptions and goals of her teacher's play-centered pedagogy. Jane's cautious concern for correctness conflicted with Mrs. Benedict's emphasis on risk taking and problem solving. Jane's reticence with adults, and most of the time with peers as well, seemed rooted in the issue of competence. She may have registered the disparity between adult knowledge of written language and her own as a source of tension. She wanted to be able to read and write with adult accuracy and fluency, and felt incompetent unless she could perform to this standard. When she was reading or writing with adults, she expected their eyes to measure her performance and find fault. Her behavior at home with her mother was similar, even though her mother did not appear to request or encourage this perfectionism. Rather, it seemed that Jane had defined literacy as a private world she shared with her mother, one in which her mother represented the ideal that Jane aspired to in her imagination but dared not pretend to in reality.

Even with peers, Jane seemed wary of what they might know that she didn't. Early in the year, when Mrs. Benedict suggested that she might talk to Beverly about her writing, she ignored the suggestion and walked away when Beverly offered a spelling tip. Later in the year Jane's interactions with peers were often characterized by overt competitiveness. The following interchange was recorded in March:

Sarah: I'm writing about a flower.
Jane: Why don't you do something else?
Sarah: No. Why should I? I'm still writing about the flower. This is gonna be a beautiful flower.
Jane: My flowers are beautifuller than yours.
Sarah: You don't even know how to make 'em.
Jane: Yes, I do.
Sarah: I can make beautiful hearts.
Jane: So can I.
Sarah: See, this is one of my best hearts.
Jane: Right, that's one of your best?....Look.

Sarah: That's really gross.
Jane: I make beautifuller things than you do. You know why? 'Cause I practice more than you do.

Jane's relations with peers in the classroom may have been connected to the experiences her mother described with older dominating playmates.

In contrast to Luke, who would only approach reading and writing as play, Jane seemed unable to be playful at reading and writing, not because she was uninterested but because she could not escape the eye of judgment. She always seemed to have an adult in her mind, measuring her performance against the desired competence. Only when she read to her younger brother, where her status as more knowledgeable was secure, could she act the confident reader. The fact that she actually knew a great deal about written language worked against her, because she wasn't satisfied until she was sure that all the pieces fit together. There was no margin for error with Jane—if it wasn't all right, it was all wrong.

Jane's orientation toward literacy defined all the social relations of the classroom as places where it was unsafe to take risks to figure out how meaning is represented in written language. Her teachers' encouragement of risk taking created tension for Jane, because she wanted to meet adult expectations but she also wanted to be correct. Her investment in correctness and adult-like competence seemed to make her suspicious of her teachers' acceptance of imperfection. Slowly, out of her teachers' trust of her ability to solve problems, she grew to trust her own knowledge and judgment. In her quiet way Jane began to share her reading and writing more comfortably with adults and peers, becoming open to more opportunities for learning in those literacy events.

The tensions that Jane experienced in the kindergarten literacy program highlight the aspect of evaluation criteria within particular approaches to work and pedagogy. In visible pedagogies, as in much working-class and lower-middle-class work, performance and products are evaluated against a single, uniform standard established by those in authority. Not measuring up can have a high cost in access to social and economic opportunities and outcomes. Jane's investment in measuring up to adult standards was more consistent with this type of evaluation than with the more varied and flexible criteria of the invisible pedagogy.

It seems unlikely, however, that Jane's attention was focused on these long-range costs, especially since her parents did not appear to emphasize such aspects of achievement in school. It's more likely that her father's negative school experiences found expression in ways that

gave Jane reason for caution about how she would be received in the classroom. Her cautious approach to literacy may also have been connected to the gender issues discussed in Chapter 2. If becoming literate herself represented the active choice of female identity in a family where gender divisions were strong and potentially in conflict around literacy, the risks of making that choice may have included loss of emotional connection with her father and or loss of valued aspects of the self that are assigned to the male world. When identity issues are perceived as all-or-nothing choices, caution makes sense. Walkerdine (1985) argues that silence, lack of confidence, and suppressed hostility are common responses to the tensions girls experience in classrooms where active, independent learning is the expectation, for this norm contradicts other norms of female gender identity. Further discussion of this point will be deferred until Chapter 6 following the learning biographies of several other girls.

PEDAGOGICAL TENSIONS FOR CHILDREN AND TEACHERS

The discussion so far has treated the children's responses to the play-centered, invisible pedagogy as rooted in the orientations toward literacy they brought into the classroom. I have argued that these orientations toward literacy are constructed in the process of defining one's identity within the social relations of the family, and that, although this process takes place within the personal world of families, it is there that children first encounter and respond to the social dynamics of class and gender. While the classroom may be children's first full-fledged participation in the larger social world, they enter it already positioned within relations of gender and work. These positions are not fixed, however, and are often characterized by tensions and contradictions. In addition, they are constantly reconstructed in the everyday social life of school and family.

The fact that pedagogy, as one site of that reconstruction, is also socially positioned (as discussed in Chapter 3) introduces a source of potential tension between children's orientations toward literacy and teachers' pedagogical assumptions and goals. The discussion so far has dealt with these tensions as they appeared in the children's learning biographies. In examining classroom social dynamics, however, it is also important to consider how teachers who use an invisible pedagogy are positioned within class and gender relations and the tensions they may bring into classroom literacy events. In addition to whatever conflicts teachers may experience about an invisible pedagogy because of disjunctions in their own educational and social class histories,

there are potential conflicts for teachers inherent in their position in status and dominance hierarchies.

Teachers of young children, mostly women, are generally expected to deliver a curriculum determined by others, usually men, in authority.[1] Even when they are given latitude in *how* they teach, they are not free to choose *what* they teach. Given the dominance of visible pedagogies in secondary schools and colleges, the prescribed outcomes of early education necessarily include traditionally defined knowledge and skills. Thus teachers who use an invisible pedagogy are under pressure to guide children toward the same knowledge and skills that are explicitly taught in a visible pedagogy. Moreover, it has been argued that the developmental theories that provide the framework for teachers' decisions in an invisible pedagogy take adult middle-class male knowledge and skills as the highest stage of development, norms that may not accord with the development of girls and non-middle-class boys (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Walkerdine, 1985). There is reason to believe, then, that teachers may experience some tension around conflicting pedagogical goals, especially given their position in status and dominance hierarchies.

The result of these constraints, which put teachers in conflict with the invisible pedagogy's stated goal of following the child's lead, may be, according to Bernstein (1975), that, in practice, the hidden curriculum of an invisible pedagogy is often the isolated knowledge and skills of visible pedagogy. He speculates that individual children or different groups of children may respond differently in this situation, some being more sensitive to the hidden curriculum than others, and that teachers may differentiate among children in their delivery of the hidden curriculum.

A detailed analysis of Mrs. Benedict's kindergarten pedagogy in this respect is not possible on the basis of the data collected in this study, but there is no doubt that she felt demands for traditional skill development, even at the kindergarten level. She did not use standardized tests herself, but it was important that children score well on standardized reading tests when they were administered to all first graders. This was seen as a necessary protection of children's future school careers and of her freedom to use an invisible pedagogy. She overtly demonstrated and encouraged skills that she judged to be directly useful to children in their reading and writing; there was nothing hidden about this curriculum, and it certainly included some traditional reading and writing skills. There was no evidence during the kindergarten year, however, of direct or indirect teaching of less useful skills that might be regarded as traditional kindergarten fare. The Letter of the Week curriculum, for example, consisted entirely of

high frequency initial consonants; there was no use of labels such as 'consonant' and no presentation or discussion of 'long and short vowels.' To satisfy school record-keeping requirements about children's phonics skills, she reviewed their writing and assessed their knowledge of sound–letter correspondences on the basis of their spellings.

In at least one respect, however, Mrs. Benedict's pedagogy was more visible than invisible: the practice of teacher's choice time. Her power and authority as the teacher were explicitly expressed in the regulation of children's activities during this block of time. Although the activities themselves might allow considerable latitude for children's choice and self-regulation, their participation in these activities was required. The presence of some such contradictions within invisible pedagogies is undoubtedly inevitable given the teacher's responsibility for the health, safety, and learning of large groups of children. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the role such contradictions may play in the social dynamics of the classroom.

That literacy activities were regularly included in teacher's choice time in the kindergarten classroom made literacy to some extent an adult-sponsored rather than a self-selected activity. The tensions I have described in Jack's, Luke's, and Jane's participation in classroom literacy events can be more fully understood by taking this fact into account. Their various treatments of literacy as an adult-regulated task were consistent, not only with orientations they had constructed outside school, but also with at least one level of their teacher's organization of literacy events in the classroom.

Another possible source of tensions for children within the invisible pedagogy itself is suggested by Davies's (1982) study of children's culture within the school setting. She argues that children's agendas focus primarily on peer culture rather than on the adult-defined goals of schooling. Children generally want, and are able, to attend to their teachers' agendas as well as their own, but they expect teachers to take responsibility for their learning. What she calls the "open model" of teaching (Bernstein's invisible pedagogy) forces children to take partial responsibility for teachers' agendas as well as their own. Children remain aware, however, of their limited power and the ultimate authority of adults, and they seek to learn the rules for using their responsibility within the classroom and for interacting with their teachers. This seems consistent with Bernstein's (1975) and Walkerdine's (1985) description of invisible pedagogies as offering the illusion of choice and control to children, while the teacher's power remains implicit. What Davies implies is that children are not really deceived by the illusion. If Davies's analysis is applicable to younger children as well as to the 11-year-olds she studied, the tensions that Jack, Luke, and Jane experienced may have been related to difficulty

in deciphering their teachers' agendas and the extent to which the children were responsible for them. The matter of peer culture will be discussed further in Chapter 7, because it appeared to take on greater importance to the children in first and second grade.

Thus as both teachers and children constructed their social relations in literacy events, they were dealing with tensions and conflicts that arose from the intersection of literacy and pedagogy with gender and work relations in and out of the classroom. In their ways of dealing with what they experienced as personal and interpersonal tensions, they constructed and reconstructed not only their orientations toward literacy but also their positions in those gender and work relations, positions which were at the very core of their identities. The complexity and individuality of these negotiations is underscored in the next chapter, where the learning biographies of nine additional children are examined as a basis for considering how the structuring processes of gender relations operate in the literacy learning of individuals.

ENDNOTES

[1] Most of these studies describe such patterns in 'low-ability' reading groups, in which instruction is also described as emphasizing fragmented skills rather than comprehension. This focus in the content of instruction might be expected to lead to the kind of cognitive conflicts between child and curriculum described earlier from the emergent literacy perspective. What is relevant here are the social conflicts and tensions within the interactional dynamics of literacy instruction.

[2] In his definition of "heteroglossia" Bakhtin (1981) makes a similar claim about language, which by virtue of its social nature is permeated throughout with conflictual meaning.

[3] While Jane's classroom behavior could be seen as conforming to a typical 'good girl' profile, she in fact resisted being typecast. One day, for example, she joined the space wars play of a group of boys in the drama area and refused to accept Jack's assigning her the mother role.

[4] See Apple (1986) for an analysis of the politics of gender and teaching, and Edelsky (1988) for a commentary on current moves toward deskilling elementary language arts teachers.

[5] Walkerdine (1985) also argues that, as teachers in invisible pedagogies, women are placed in inherently conflictual positions because they must suppress in themselves the initiative and independence they seek to nurture in children. Ironically, Bernstein (1975) describes how women historically enhanced their social status by developing and professionalizing the invisible pedagogies that required this constant attentiveness to children.

chapter 6
Beyond Stereotypes: The Complexity of Negotiating Gender and Work Relations in Literacy Learning

In this chapter I draw on the family data and kindergarten learning biographies of nine additional children to examine how the dynamics of literacy learning were connected to relations of gender and work.[1] Although I have tried to convey the complexity and individuality of literacy learning in the learning biographies presented so far, there is much that could be interpreted as showing consistent gender differences in children's behavior rather than individual patterns that have their sources in gender and work relations. From the biographies of Jack, Luke, Beatrix, and Jane, one might well conclude that, within this subculture at least, boys were destined to resist or merely tolerate reading and writing and treat them as adult-imposed work, while girls were fated to invest in reading and writing as play or overinvest in them as measures of self-worth. However, such characterizations would constitute gender stereotypes which are not supported by the larger body of data from this study. The learning biographies suggest instead that the role of gender and work relations in literacy learning is more complex than the ways it has been conceptualized in much of the research addressing such issues. A discussion of that research lays the groundwork for a reconceptualization of how literacy learning is connected to gender and work relations.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND WORK RELATIONS IN LITERACY LEARNING

Some of the research discussed at the beginnings of the previous two chapters described both individual differences (Chapter 4) and ten-

sions (Chapter 5) in children's literacy learning as related to varied perceptions of the nature of literacy as an activity. Differences in the ways children approach literacy events have been explained in ways that might be characterized as having to do with distinctions between work and play. Within the emergent literacy perspective, for instance, children in general are said to approach literacy as play in the sense that it is a self-selected and self-regulated activity which serves the child's own interests and purposes; individual differences are seen to result from variation in children's interests and purposes. The social construction of literacy perspective focuses on differences among varied cultural groups in the ways literacy is practiced as work and play, and thus in the ways children from these groups approach literacy. In the literacy as social status and identity perspective these group differences are connected to the organization of work in the larger society and the way status and rewards are differentially distributed. All three perspectives lead to the identification of tensions between child and curriculum when the approach to literacy in the classroom is at odds with the child's approach.

Only rarely have any of these discussions suggested that gender might be involved in perceptions of the nature of literacy as an activity. For that reason, in this section I foreground the discussion of gender and its connection to literacy and work. Although consideration of how gender figures in literacy learning has not been at the core of the three theoretical perspectives outlined in this book, the three perspectives parallel in significant ways the conceptual approaches that have been taken to the study of gender in education, as described by Goetz and Grant (1988). I therefore use the framework of the theoretical perspectives on literacy learning to characterize research on beginning literacy that focuses on gender.

In their search for universal developmental patterns, researchers guided by the emergent literacy perspective have paid little attention to gender. Earlier work on reading readiness and early school achievement, however, included a line of research which was consistent with the emergent literacy perspective in its focus on the biological basis of cognition. Researchers sought to explain the evidence of gender differences in early reading achievement favoring girls (e.g., Dykstra & Tinney, 1969) and the higher rate of boys identified as having reading disabilities (e.g., Crosby, 1969) by proposing various sex-linked genetic determiners of ability (e.g., Eisenberg, 1966). In reviewing this work, Downing, May, and Ollila (1982) reach the same conclusion that Goetz and Grant (1988) come to regarding biological-genetic explanations of gender differences in education: There is little

convincing evidence to support biological rather than social and cultural explanations of observed gender differences.

As the emergent literacy perspective came to dominate in research on beginning literacy, investigators of the process of learning did not attend to or identify gender differences in the way children learned to read and write. Differences in the rate at which children acquire knowledge about written language have generally been attributed to the opportunities they have to see, manipulate, and get information about print (as in Ferreiro, 1984), but gender differences have not been described or explained in this manner.

Research that has been central to the social construction of literacy perspective has similarly ignored issues of gender, despite a focus on the cultural practices of groups defined by race, ethnicity, class, and religion. Some researchers, almost incidentally, describe gender-differentiated literacy practices without examining their impact on children's learning (e.g., Heath, 1983); others describe the practices of both adults and children at a generic level that makes gender invisible (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1984). Such studies have generally focused on differences *between* communities rather than *within* communities, and gender almost always has to do with the internal organization of communities. Even classroom studies which have focused on variation in rules for participating in literacy events within the classroom have rarely dealt with gender issues (e.g., Borko & Eisenhart, 1989).

Still, there is a body of work focusing on gender issues which is consistent with the social construction of literacy perspective. First, there are researchers who seek cultural explanations for gender disparities in reading achievement by examining such factors as gender-biased reading materials, the interaction of boys with female teachers, and culturally patterned perceptions of gender roles. In a review of this research Downing et al. (1982) argue that only the third explanation is supported by the evidence, which shows that North American children's perception of reading as a female activity increases over the elementary school years.

Other researchers have been less concerned with levels of achievement and more concerned with examining gender differences in literacy practices and the way these differences are socially constructed. For example, gender differences in children's reading and writing interests are described and their social sources and consequences discussed by Johnson and Greenbaum (1982), Poynton (1985), and Segel (1986).[2] Regarding instructional practices, Gilbert (1989a) reports examples of teachers' inclination to emphasize male interests and to reinforce gender stereotypes in their selection of

reading and writing materials in the classroom,[1] in keeping with studies showing general patterns of teachers' paying more attention to boys and having higher expectations for them (Clarricoates, 1978; Stanworth, 1981).[2] In general, the concern in these discussions is with the way children's reading and writing experiences may contribute to their broader socialization into conventional gender roles and the limitations imposed by these roles on girls in particular, but on boys as well. Little attention is given to how gender differences in children's reading and writing interests and gender-differentiated classroom practices might influence the course of literacy learning itself beyond their possible impact on overall achievement.[3]

Research within the literacy as social status and identity perspective has attended to issues of class, race, and ethnicity more than to gender. Although some of the studies of gender differences described above have noted that gender-differentiated literacy practices are also valued differently (e.g., Clarricoates, 1978; Segel, 1986), other work has focused more directly on status and dominance relations in literacy learning. Gilbert (1989a) argues that when girls read or write the male-oriented texts that are more highly valued in school, they must identify with male experiences and values that marginalize females; and when they read or write female-oriented texts that may be more connected to their own experience, the texts still convey the subordinate status of females and the very reading or writing of them may be regarded as a low-status activity. Thus in the act of reading or writing girls must either affirm or deny their identity as females, and confirm the subordinate status of females either way.[4] Several studies describe tensions related to this dynamic in girls' reading and writing. Gilbert (1989a) analyzes a text written by a 10-year-old girl as showing both resistance and accommodation to the conventions of the romance genre, and Christian-Smith (1990) and Cherland (1990) describe similar phenomena in the reading of adolescent and pre-adolescent girls. Steedman's (1982) analysis of a story written by three 8-year-old girls shows them grappling with tensions about their present and future status as working-class females. In general, however, these studies describe the expression of tensions around gender relations in the texts girls read and write, rather than the experience of tensions in the very activities of reading and writing.

Although Walkerdine (1985) does not deal directly with literacy learning, she provides a framework for examining gender-related tensions that children may experience in literacy activities. In her discussion of girls' behavior in classrooms with invisible pedagogies, she argues that girls must position themselves within contradictory discourses: one describes a learner as active, daring, and independent,

and another describes a girl as docile, obedient, and helpful. In the pedagogical discourse, learners are described in supposedly universal terms which are in fact more consistent with descriptions of males than of females in other discourses. Moreover, the teacher's role in an invisible pedagogy is defined in a way that coincides more closely with descriptions of females than with descriptions of learners: teachers are to watch, follow, and support the child's initiative. Thus, to the extent that girls identify with their (usually) female teachers, they are confronted with a contradiction between what their teachers value (i.e., active, daring, risk-taking behavior) and what their teachers do (i.e., watch, follow, support). Walkerdine describes the way three 6-year-old girls negotiate these contradictions, ranging from hard-working silence to attention-demanding helplessness to covertly expressed hostility. She also notes tensions experienced by males, and her larger theoretical framework suggests that contradictions characterize the whole system of gender relations and create tensions for both males and females.

A framework like Walkerdine's offers a way of understanding the relationship between individuals and a system of social relations not as a matter of individuals fulfilling (or not fulfilling) their determined social roles, but as a process of individuals negotiating the tensions created by a set of contradictions inherent in existing social relations. The contradictions may be systemically defined, but individuals confront them in different constellations and negotiate the tensions in different ways. The analysis of how gender (or any other social category) figures in literacy learning, then, does not depend upon identifying consistent patterns of difference between groups of males and females but rather upon tracing the patterns in individual's learning biographies back to sources in the system of gender relations. In this way, the connections between individuals and social systems can be examined without exaggerating either individual autonomy or social determination.

This chapter undertakes such an analysis of the learning biographies of nine children during their kindergarten year. The chapter begins with two learning biographies—George and Roberta—that offer counterevidence to gender stereotypes that might be drawn from the earlier biographies of Luke and Jack, Beatrix and Jane. George's full investment in literacy as play and Roberta's strong resistance to literacy, I argue, are not exceptions to otherwise consistent patterns of gender differences but are individual patterns which have sources in gender and work relations. Following the biographies of George and Roberta are condensed biographies of four additional boys and three girls, highlighting the connections between the dynamics of literacy

learning and gender and work relations. The discussion of these connections suggests some common themes in systems of gender and work relations, as well as contradictions that create tensions for children in literacy learning.

GEORGE

My home visit with George and later interview with his mother revealed a child with a strong sense of his own interests and the confidence that adults would share them. When I rang the doorbell at his house, I was greeted by his mother and younger brother. George had to be called away from his activities in his room even though he was expecting my visit. As I started to talk to him, George interrupted to say, "Guess what's exciting? I'm going to kindergarten, but I lost two teeth already." He led me to his room, where a large Lego block construction filled the center of the floor. He described it to me as a space lab and got out some Star Wars characters to go with it. His mother reported later that he was happy in his room building, even when other children were playing outside.

From the very beginning, George was active and animated in sharing his interests with me; he was also willing to respond to my reading and writing agendas as long as they interested him. When I invited him to do some writing, he said he could write his name and chose plain paper and one of his own crayons after checking to see if I liked pink. After printing his first name in upper case letters, he commented good humoredly that one of the letters was upside down. Then he wrote *mom*, MOM, noting that he had made a *W* at the end. He said he wrote his mom and dad notes when they weren't feeling well and agreed to show me how he did it. On another sheet of paper, he wrote *mom* again, then went to get a sheet of scrap paper from a drawer in the diningroom so I could write *love* for him to copy. He copied LOVE underneath MOM on his paper and read it as, "I love Mom." When I offered to write something for him, he asked me to write the names of Star Wars characters, including the sentence, "Chewbaca is a wookie." Then he said, "We did a lot of writing," and got up to find a mask to show me.

In the parent interview his mother said that he was not a perfectionist about writing and that she didn't make a point of reversed letters although she did point out to him that they were backwards or upside down. "He doesn't show any great interest in sitting down and practicing letters, so I tend not to push it," she said. "I'd rather not create a real hatred of the whole idea and just let it go, 'cause when he's interested, he's interested." He was most likely to write something, she said, when he needed it in his play. Although he knew letters and sounds, he used them to recognize words and not to try to spell them, preferring to copy from models.

George was more interested in being read to than in reading himself. After showing me one of his favorite books that he said he couldn't read

except for the title, he selected the Star Wars comic from my collection for me to read to him. I read several panels, but he turned the page before I had finished reading all of it. I read the next page, then stopped because it wasn't making much sense. He said he wanted to read "Empire" ("The Empire Strikes Back") because it was better. I suggested that he find a good part to read. He looked through the pages and then asked me to read again the part I had already read to him. When I finished, I said it was hard to understand what was going on. He said *he* knew, they were blowing up Obi-Wan Kenobi's planet, and pointed to a picture of an explosion. He remained interested in the story despite its unfamiliarity and disjointedness.

When I talked with George about his visit to kindergarten the previous spring, he took me out to the hallway to show me the writing he had done during the visit. Among the drawings hanging on the wall was the one he had drawn at kindergarten with his dictated language written on it by the teacher. When he asked me to read it, I pointed out his name and asked him to help me with the rest. He pointed with his finger and recited the text fairly accurately from memory. His finger did not move as fast as his voice, however, and he was left pointing at the last word with nothing left to say. He looked at it for a moment, then turned to me and said he wanted to show me his hot bike.

His mother later told me that they read to George a lot, always at bedtime and at other times as well. She described him as choosing a wide range of books and listening intently. Although he had memorized some favorite books and would tell stories to the pictures for his younger brother, she did not think he was interested in learning to read words. "It's gonna come when he wants it to, and that's fine," she commented. He was very active in telling and acting out stories, though. "He's got a *good* imagination," she said, "he makes up the most incredible stories."

In contrast to Luke and Jack, George did not treat reading and writing as adult-sponsored work. He was more like Beatrix in his engagement in stories and print as part of his play. He obviously enjoyed sharing his activities with adults, but his interactions with stories and print did not depend upon adult initiation or response. He was, however, more inclined than Beatrix to draw on adults as resources for dealing with print, showing little evidence of pretend reading or invented spelling. His mother supported, but did not direct or correct, his engagement in stories and print as part of his play; she assumed that he would eventually learn to read and write out of his own interest in these activities. Before his younger brother was born, George had gone to a baby-sitter who helped her older children practice letter formation, but otherwise George had not been exposed to more directive forms of teaching. Other than playing school with

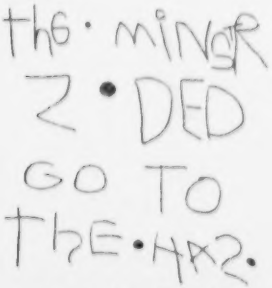
older children in the neighborhood, George had no expectations for anything but a play-centered pedagogy in regard to literacy.

George also showed no signs of identifying literacy as gender-differentiated behavior. This may be partly because his mother followed his initiatives rather than imposing her own, and because there were no older siblings to contribute to gender-based distinctions. George's father may also have been more involved in literacy activities with his son than were some of the other fathers. My evidence on this point is limited, but his mother described a book George's father had bought for him and phrased her descriptions of reading to George as including both parents, for example "we do read to him a lot." At the end of the kindergarten year, she described George's favorite writing topics as coming out of the old movies the family enjoyed watching together, his parents teasing each other about his mother's science fiction favorites and his father's comedies. George's father worked in a technical professional position, and his mother had just finished a master's degree in education, but she was staying at home while their children were young. Even though she clearly took the major responsibility for parenting, the impression she gave was of both parents' interest in, and enjoyment of, shared activities that connected to George's literacy.

In the kindergarten classroom George continued to pursue his play interests and attended to print when it served his play. He did not choose the writing or library areas, but was engaged in listening to stories or creating stories in his drawings when he was asked to go there. When Mrs. Benedict read to the class, he usually sat right next to her so he could look at the pictures as she read, and in his journal he drew pictures of space monsters and wars. His attention to print did not extend beyond initial letters. One day he went to the sign-up board to hang his card in the small blocks area. Mrs. Benedict told him to look for the *S* and suggested he confirm his choice by checking the rest of the letters. Instead he looked at the other cards hung there, found Arnie's and said, "Oh, Arnie's there, right." In the writing area one day, he described his picture to Mrs. Benedict, used a word card in his writing folder to copy *the*, and asked his teacher how to spell *robot*. He heard the *R*, wrote it, and said he wanted to go to the small blocks area. Mrs. Benedict asked him what else he heard and he said, "B, but that's the end." He looked at his alphabet card, though, and said he heard *T* at the end. Mrs. Benedict told him he had worked really well and asked if he would like her to write the rest. He dictated and she wrote, "The robot is going to the moon. He is waiting at the star." When she finished and read it, he giggled.

By the end of October George understood that he could figure out spellings for himself and was fully engaged in the process of inventing

spellings in a playful way. One day he wrote *monster*, MiNSR , then said, "Oh, oh, guess what? I forgot to put in the T," and added it. He used his pocket card for *the* and sounded the rest to write, "The monsters did go to the..." He then asked Mrs. Gundersheim, "You know what they did go to? We live in it and it begins with H." The answer was *house*, which he spelled HAS.



The monster·
s did
go to
the house.

Just before Thanksgiving George began writing a story about a knight, which he sustained over a week and a half, including the Thanksgiving vacation. He chose to go to the writing area during children's choice time to work on this piece and shared it twice at the authors' circle. He clearly planned before he wrote, announcing one day, "You know what's going to happen at the end of this story? They're all going to be sitting around a campfire." The writing had become as important as the pictures in telling the story, and he made voice–print match in reading his writing. His finished piece, *The Knight's Story*, was the first in the class to be published; on his "About the Author" page George wrote, "I like stories and school."

Following his engagement in invented spelling, George began to attend more fully to print in the classroom and in books. He looked at the snack chart one day before Mrs. Gundersheim had changed the entry from the previous day and asked, "Are we having that again?" In December he was overheard telling a friend that he couldn't read, but he successfully read simple story texts with a teacher. In January he persisted in trying to make sense while reading a story with Mrs. Benedict even when the text was difficult for him. He used graphic cues, sometimes unproductively, but did not settle for nonsense, as in the following exchange:

Text: Then I'll let you go.
George: Then I elf? you go.
Teacher: Then I'll elf you go?
George: Then I'll *let* you go.

For several months George tried to write space adventure stories based on TV programs, but he didn't get enough of the story onto the page for

other people to follow it. He was frustrated when his audience didn't get it, but he still said, "I like to go to writing, especially when I make stories." In April Mrs. Benedict suggested that he write about something that he knew and George made occasional attempts to write about personal experience, but his heart was not in it. He began to incorporate visual jokes into his drawings, like a bad guy whose gun said BAG when it was supposed to say BANG. He was eager to publish a story he wrote about the three stooges but dropped it when he realized that the other children did not understand it.

Early in June George wrote a personal narrative about a family vacation. After talking to Mrs. Benedict about it, he decided to add something about the bunkbeds they slept in. When she saw him drawing them into the picture, she asked if he was going to write about them. George said, "I didn't wanna write about that, that's not exciting." At the end of the school year he finally published a second adventure story about a sword fight. When he was interviewed about writing, he said that he felt like writing all the time, "even when I get home." His mother said that he made his own books at home and wrote letters to people. She was fascinated by his strategies for figuring out how to spell words and surprised by his rapid progress in writing. When George was asked who was a good writer, he identified himself, saying, "I like what I write, and my writing likes me."

For a short time in February, George's reading was characterized by overattention to graphic cues. He ignored the pictures unless a teacher suggested he look at them and did not pause or question nonsensical miscues, although he seemed to be bothered by not making sense. He took risks and plunged ahead, but appeared to be unable to integrate his new attention to print with his sense of story. He was beginning to think of himself as a reader, though; his mother reported that he picked up a Peter Pan book he had never seen before, looked at it, and said, "Wow, I can read this by myself," before asking her to read to him.

By April when he read an unfamiliar text with graduate student researcher Jean McClellan, he studied the pictures before reading each page and checked them again after trying the initial sound of a troublesome word. His reading was marked by comments on his pleasure in the story as well as his displeasure when he couldn't make sense of his reading. After he read the last sentence on the first page, "I put it in a cage," he said, "I bet it gets out." Later when he encountered the sentence, "I saw a little frog," he read, "I swam a lake," after looking at the picture, then struggled more with *saw*: "swit a, I sw-, I swipt, a little frog. Hmmm, it makes no sense." In only four cases was he unable to arrive at a reading that preserved the meaning of the text.

At this point George read print in the classroom with ease, and when he was interviewed about reading, he talked about the relationship between

writing and reading. "Well, first I found out about learning," he said. "Then I started writing. I had so many ideas in my head. And when I read books, I remember words from my writing, and then I know what it is." His mother described his reading at home by saying, "He's into it, into it a lot. He reads whole books now." She said he picked up a Snow White book one day that he had not seen before and spent all day reading it until he finished the story.

Like Beatrix, George already treated reading and writing as self-directed play and therefore experienced little tension with his teachers' play-centered pedagogy. His interest in stories led him to print, and as soon as he realized there were ways to figure out spellings, he was engaged in putting all the ideas in his head down on the page. From his own writing he developed the knowledge of written words that allowed him to read the stories others had written. George's self-direction and pleasure in literacy were consistent with his participation in literacy events at home, where his mother, and apparently his father as well, followed his lead and valued his accomplishments rather than trying to impose their agendas or standards.

As in Beatrix's family, there was a sense of mutual pleasure in sharing stories, which was reflected in George's interest in stories that magnified reality in some way, either the science fiction his mother loved or the humor his father enjoyed. Because of the gender and work relations in his family around literacy, George was unconcerned about, and perhaps even unaware of, notions of literacy as a female activity or as adult-sponsored work. In his experience he had not directly encountered the kinds of contradictions that created tensions for other children in literacy learning, although he may have registered the low status of domestic topics as female territory. His interest in the response of male peers to his stories certainly exceeded his concern about teacher response and encouraged his valuing of material that was exciting and funny. On all these points, Roberta's story is considerably different from George's, as well as from Beatrix's and Jane's.

ROBERTA

Throughout my home visit with her, Roberta seemed to be watching me and trying to figure me out, perhaps trying to gauge what I wanted from her. She was outdoors when I arrived at her house but showed no sign of expecting my visit as I introduced myself to her and explained why I was there. Her mother and older brother greeted me at the door, and when I asked Roberta where she usually played, she looked at me quizically. Her mother said, "In her room," and Roberta took me there at my request.

When I asked what she liked to do, she said, "Dress my dollies," and showed me her favorite, Chatty Cathy, but with no real enthusiasm. Her mother later said that she had never been very interested in dolls.

Roberta was clearly interested in stories and books, but not very interested in reading herself despite her ability to do so. When I asked if she had a favorite book, she said yes and pulled *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back!* from the bottom of a pile of books on her well-stocked bookshelf. I asked if she could read it, and she said that she couldn't read "so good," that she had other books, apparently meaning others that she could read. She showed me a book that was part of a basal reading series but ignored requests to show me how she read it. Then she found another story designed for beginning readers and told me she read it to her stuffed monkey. I asked if she would read it to me and she did, commenting at one point that it had hard words. When I got out my books, she surveyed them eagerly and lined up three for me to read. All three were books she either owned or had had read to her before. She listened intently as I read, making occasional comments about the characters or action of the story.

In the parent interview, her mother reported that Roberta had always loved books, taking them to bed with her as a baby instead of dolls or stuffed animals. In addition to reading to her, her mother and her older brother, following his mother's lead, had taught her to read through phonics games. Her mother was a teacher who had taught reading, and she had lots of beginning reading books around the house. She said that teaching phonics came naturally to her and that she could "pretty well pinpoint what she's up to" in a sequence of phonics rules. She announced that Roberta could have read *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back!* if she tried and that the book she read to me was the first book she had ever read. "She knew she couldn't flub it," said her mother. Roberta did not chime in when she was being read to, her mother reported, "because that's not the way I taught her." Instead they took turns reading pages, and Roberta was now able to read material she had not seen before; "She can sound most words out unless they're strange," her mother said. But when I asked if Roberta read the cards in the board games she played with her brother, her mother said that she didn't read that well and "it's work."

It also appeared that Roberta was more interested in being read to than in writing. When I brought up writing, she asked me to read another book. I did and then got out my writing supplies. Roberta asked me what she should write and I said whatever she wanted to. She said "cat" and printed it in upper case letters. Then she said, "I can write *flat*." I asked, "Can you?" and she said yes, so I said, "Would you?" and she did. When I asked, "Anything else?" she said, "Yes, lots," but wrote nothing. I asked what she did with her writing, and she said she sent it to her mom and dad. She added MOMY to her list of words, then DO , saying, "Oh, who cares?" apparently about the backwards *G*. She said she would write

"Clifford" (the title of one of the books I read to her) but I would have to spell it for her. I asked her how she thought it was spelled and said it slowly while she listened. She wrote LiFR, soliciting my approval of each letter. When we talked about her visit to kindergarten, she drew a rainbow like the one she had drawn there. She said she would write "Rainbows live forever" on it. She asked me to spell *the*, and asked if I didn't like her *E*'s better than her friends', theirs were messy or they put a line on the other side, too. She then asked me to finish the writing for her because I could do it faster. As I packed up my bag to get ready to leave, she asked me to read yet another book to her, one she didn't recognize until I began reading it—*Old MacDonald Had a Farm*.

Roberta's mother later confirmed that Roberta did send notes to her parents, lists of words, not messages. "I haven't been able to get across to her the concept of sentences," she said. Her father saw this writing as a bid for attention. She had written a letter to a relative because her brother was writing one. "Whenever he does something, she has to do it, too," her father said. She had been writing since she was 2½ or 3, her mother said, using beginning school workbooks to trace and copy letters. She often asked how to spell words but could sound them out for herself if asked to, according to her mother. When she saw Roberta's spelling of *Clifford*, she commented, "I was going to teach her the ER because she does that a lot, just writes R." Her mother told me she had been listening to my visit with Roberta from the livingroom and laughed when her daughter kept me there to read her another book.

Although Roberta loved stories and books, she obviously saw reading and writing as adult-imposed work. In her interaction with me she seemed to want to show me that she could indeed read and write, but only in response to direct and persistent initiatives from me. Her real engagement was in getting me to read to her. Her mother appeared to believe that Roberta would not learn to read and write unless adults directly taught her and required her to practice. She took Roberta's love of books for granted and saw the real business of reading and writing as learning sound–letter correspondences and the conventions of written language. Although she treated her teaching in a game-like way, she acknowledged that Roberta viewed reading and writing as work she would get someone else to do for her if possible.

Gender and work relations around literacy appeared to be complexly intertwined in this family. Roberta's father was one of the few who participated in the interviews with me. Although his wife did most of the talking, his comments indicated that he was aware of his daughter's reading and writing behavior. The extent of his involvement in literacy activities with her was difficult to judge, although his wife described Roberta's sitting in his lap while he was reading the

paper and identifying the words she could read. Both parents were employed in education and human development professions and made it clear that reading and writing were important in their work, but it was Roberta's mother who expressed a love of recreational reading. When she reported that she was rarely without a book, her husband commented, "Never a good book." This remark suggested that, like the husbands of the women in Radway's (1984) study who read romance fiction, he regarded reading as valuable only if it was work oriented. At the end of the interview, he said he thought that "Sesame Street" had been an influence on Roberta's reading and pulled from his shelf a book reporting research on the effects of "Sesame Street" on children's learning.

Despite her father's apparent interest in Roberta's literacy activities, it was clearly her mother who was engaged in teaching her to read and write. And while her model of recreational reading may have contributed to Roberta's love of books, her deliberate instruction and insistence on attending to sounds and letters seemed to have disconnected the daughter's love of books and stories from the activity of learning to read and write. In the intimate closeness of being read to, Roberta identified with her mother's love of stories. But because literacy learning was regarded as adult-imposed and controlled activity, Roberta became a separate object of her mother's work in their teaching interactions.

Roberta's older brother also played an important role in her literacy activities. It appeared from her parents' report that Roberta wished to be like her brother, not to differentiate herself from him.* They described the two children as doing things together when Roberta's brother had no friends available. He read to her and copied his mother's teaching methods, and she wanted to do whatever he did. It was not clear from the parents' report whether or not Roberta's brother was an avid reader or writer, but it was clear that in his interactions with his sister he followed his mother's example of overt phonics instruction. Thus as Roberta began school, her orientation toward literacy made a play-centered pedagogy unfathomable.

During the first 2 months of kindergarten, Roberta showed little engagement in reading or writing, though she listened when stories were read to the class. An early journal entry included drawings of several flowers and a person. She told Mrs. Benedict that the person was mad because he smelled the flower and a bee stung him on the nose. What she wrote were labels:

THIS(F LOWR — This flower

THEPRSIN — The person

Even when she attempted more than labels, her language was sparse. She brought her journal to Mrs. Gundersheim one day with a drawing of a person's face and the words, "A snake bit." When Mrs. Gundersheim asked her who the snake bit, she replied, "the person." Asked if the person had a name, she said no. Mrs. Gundersheim asked what name she would give the person if she were going to name him. Roberta said, "Lamb." When her teacher asked where the snake bit Lamb, she pointed to the nose on the drawing. Mrs. Gundersheim asked her if she was going to finish this, and she said no. When asked how she would finish it if she were going to, she added "Lamb's nose" to what she had already written:

USNACBT — A snake bit

LAMNOO 2. — Lamb's nose.

In October Mrs. Gundersheim began writing questions in response to children's journal writing as a way of initiating a written dialogue. When she did this in Roberta's journal one day, Roberta complained because she couldn't answer the question with a simple yes or no.

Neither her drawing nor her writing appeared to engage her interest. She often drew flowers and rainbows, common subjects among the children in the class. One day she drew a picture of a robot, another popular subject, and told me she didn't know what to write about it. I suggested that if she thought about it, she might think of something to write. She responded, "I don't think I can think about it." Finally she asked the other children at the table if they knew any stories with a robot in them and then exclaimed, "I know, 'Robot goes bananas.'" That's what she wrote beside her picture.

Although she spent time looking at books, she showed little interest in reading them. One day in the library area she showed me a book she said she had at home, *Make Way for Ducklings*. When I asked her what it was, she attempted to sound out the title, "Mack, way, for, it's too hard, I don't know that word." Another day I approached her in the library area and asked if she was reading a book. She said, "I *could* read it because I practice with my mother." When I asked why she wasn't reading it, she replied, "I don't feel like it." It was not just books that she didn't feel like reading. One day Mrs. Benedict wrote a note to Roberta and Leo, who

were playing together in the drama area. Leo tried to read it, but Roberta took it away from him and handed it to Mrs. Benedict, who declined to take it and suggested that Roberta read it. She responded by entering a house constructed of blocks and pushing the note up through the roof.

Beginning in November, Roberta occasionally wrote more elaborate pieces in which she seemed interested. One day, for example, she drew a rainbow with a face under it and wrote, "The princess lived with the king. She was happy. She had rainbow hair." She often shared her writing at the authors' circle, but she was unconcerned when her teachers or peers didn't understand what she had written. One day in January she read, "The ship is exploded because it got like it," and said she wanted only comments, no questions or suggestions. She did not respond at all when Mrs. Benedict and several children said they didn't understand what happened.

In January she began reading with less exaggerated sounding out of words. She read a highly patterned text with Mrs. Gundersheim word by word but not sounding individual letters out. She used the pictures more than the repeated language patterns to figure out the words, and she seemed to enjoy the story. She had trouble integrating the use of semantic and graphophonic cues, however. She was stuck on the first word of the snack sign one day, so Mrs. Gundersheim suggested she skip it and read the rest. After she read "____ butter and juice and crackers," she went back and tried to sound out *peanut*. Mrs. Gundersheim told her it was a kind of butter and she said, "margarine." When her teacher said they sometimes had it with jelly and it started with *P*, Roberta said, "plain." By this time the other children were calling out "peanut butter."

In February and March, Roberta began to write pieces that had more story to them than she got on the page. One day she drew a cactus and wrote, "This is a cactus." Mrs. Gundersheim asked her to keep writing, and she added, "It has no friends. But he did not pay attention. He really did not pay attention." She told Mrs. Gundersheim she had worked hard and said the cactus had not paid attention to his friends. Mrs. Gundersheim said she would like to know why it had no friends, so Roberta taped on an extra piece of paper to complete the sentence, "It has no friends because the friends were cut down by people." She explained later that the friends had been throwing out spines and pricking people, but that never got written in her story. In March she shared a story at the authors' circle about Sally's birthday party. She worked with Mrs. Benedict over several days, adding to and revising this story, which was published as *Sally's Birthday*. Only as she was illustrating the published version did it come out that Sally was a neighbor's dog, not a girl as her teachers and peers had assumed.

Roberta was quite pleased about publishing, and although it was not clear whether *Sally's Birthday* was a true story, from that time on she wrote more personal narrative than fiction. Most of these pieces were

longer and more coherent than her fiction; but she rarely showed any interest in adding to or revising them, even when her classmates showed a real interest in knowing more. She published one more piece in May, a personal narrative entitled *I Went to Cape Cod*. When she was interviewed about writing, she said that she liked to write and thought that all her pieces were very interesting. She also said that her mother had taught her to write. In response to a question about what she did when she came to something she didn't know, she replied, "Go watch TV."

In March, Roberta was more successful in integrating semantic and graphophonic cues in reading environmental print. One day she read the first part of the snack sign as "cherries and," then had trouble with the next word. Mrs. Gundersheim told her it had to do with Passover and the first word wasn't "cherries." Roberta immediately read, "charosos and matzos." But in reading stories, she often made nonsensical miscues without being concerned, especially when the story was unfamiliar. In reading a book that Mrs. Benedict had read to the class, she persisted in trying to sound out the main character's name and inadvertently skipped several lines with no sign that the resulting reading didn't make sense. But she seemed to follow the story and commented at one point, "Oh, this is the funny part." In reading an unfamiliar text about a giant and an elf with Mrs. Benedict, however, she substituted "gant" for *giant*, "hug" for *huge*, and "eef" for *elf* without indicating any dissatisfaction with her reading. When Mrs. Benedict asked what these words she read meant, she didn't know. In the print awareness survey, she focused her energy on finding problems with the print and remembered little of the story that was read to her. Nevertheless she said reading was fun in the reading interview because of all the stories. She said that her mother had helped her learn to read and that she tried the words and her mother told her what they sounded like.

In the parent interview at the end of the year, Roberta's mother said that Roberta had initially been excited about publishing, but that it had worn off. She said, "It's more exciting for me than for her." When Roberta talked about what she was going to write about, her mother would suggest that she could make a new book, but she would say no. "I think her writing is like her reading," her mother said. "She likes to start, but she doesn't like to keep on going back." She was not writing much at home but wanted homework like her brother had. "She loves workbooks," her mother said. When I observed that Roberta seemed comfortable using her own spelling at school, her father said, "Really? She better give that up fast." Her mother explained that she wouldn't ask for spellings at school because it wasn't required, but she would do it at home because it was required. She said Roberta could spell pretty well if she was asked to stop and think about it. "It's sounds, and also she knows some of the rules," she said. Despite her mother's excitement about the published books, her parents said they had not seen much progress in her writing.

They saw more progress in her reading, however. Her mother thought she was reading more fluently, though she was not quite ready for the books she wanted to read. These were longer 'chapter books' with more print and fewer illustrations. Roberta's interest seemed to be related to the fact that other children were reading these books rather than to the types of stories they contained since she brought them home and left them on the floor. Her preferences among books read to her still focused on picture books about everyday family activities.

Roberta's initial proficiency at the mechanics of reading and writing, and her interest in stories, did not serve her very well during her kindergarten year. Her orientation toward literacy as adult-sponsored work was incompatible with her teachers' belief that she would learn by becoming engaged in reading and writing texts related to her own interests and purposes. She had already separated her interest in stories from the work of reading and writing. In a sense, Roberta was already 'burned out' on written language; she knew the things she had been taught but did not want to use them in the service of her own purposes. Even her interest in stories did not seem to grow to new levels; she still wanted to be read to, but the kinds of stories she liked were the same at the end of the year as at the beginning. Like Beatrix and Jane, Roberta had an interest in literacy that was based on her enjoyment of the stories her mother read to her. But unlike Beatrix's and Jane's mothers, her mother treated literacy learning as adult-controlled work. This changed the nature of their relationship to an exchange that emphasized separateness and difference rather than connection and similarity between mother and daughter.

Even though Roberta's father and brother were involved in her literacy activities, they, too, treated reading and writing as skills she needed to be taught and thus reinforced the notion of literacy learning as imposed and monitored performance. The family collaborated in devaluing her mother's recreational reading as play and in supporting the higher status of literacy as academic knowledge. Roberta managed this set of dynamics around literacy by minimally meeting the work requirements of others and escaping to the pleasure of heard and remembered stories when she could. In the classroom she gradually tuned into her teachers' less overt standards for literacy performances, but she appeared to be going through the motions to preserve her social standing as a reader and writer. Mostly she treated the play-centered pedagogy as an opportunity to escape literacy altogether rather than an opportunity to pursue her own purposes for reading and writing.

Understanding the dynamics of literacy learning for George and Roberta requires more than identifying a pattern of gender-differenti-

ated literacy practices, and little is gained by simply labeling George and Roberta as exceptions to a pattern of differences. Instead, examining their literacy learning as the negotiation of social relations in their families and in the classroom uncovers patterns in the dynamics of their literacy learning that are connected to gender and work relations. George and Roberta are not exceptions to a single pattern of gender differences; rather, they are representative of the diverse ways children may encounter and respond to aspects of gender and work relations. The remainder of this chapter presents further evidence of this diversity in the learning biographies of seven additional children and identifies sources of tension in contradictions within systems of gender and work relations.

TENSIONS IN BOYS' LITERACY LEARNING—SHEL, LEO, ARNIE, AND DON

If the learning biographies of George and Roberta show that the category of gender does not allow simple predictions about differences between boys' and girls' literacy learning, consideration of the biographies of four other boys before and during the kindergarten year provides further evidence of the complexity of negotiating gender relations around literacy for boys. Shel, Arnie, Leo, and Don were all the youngest children in their families, each with one older sister, except for Arnie who also had an older brother. Thus their biographies allow more extensive examination of how relations with older siblings, as well as parents, are involved in children's construction of orientations toward literacy. What all four boys shared was an overriding concern with the issue of competence, which put them in conflict with the assumptions of their teachers' play-centered pedagogy. Their various ways of defining and dealing with this issue are connected to gender and work relations.

Shel

Shel's learning biography shows a child whose drive to prove competence in reading and writing controlled his literacy activity. There was no home visit with Shel before school began, but both of his parents came to the school for an interview with me early in November. They described their son as liking sports and active play with vehicles, but they said he also enjoyed having stories read to him and using books to find information about stars and space. They had recently moved from another community, where Shel had gone to preschool and daycare programs where his mother taught, and he had attended a parochial preschool the previous year. His parents characterized this as a highly structured program where children "worked," learning letters and sight word flashcards and even

bringing home assignments to be done with parents. Shel would sometimes get out his own workbooks at home and say it was "time to do school things." His older sister occasionally read to him or played school with him until, as his mother said, "It reaches a battle.... She's very domineering over him.... She wants him to do all these things and gets mad 'cause he won't do them." His parents said Shel was not used to making choices in school and had come home from kindergarten saying, "All we do is play—we don't do any papers, don't do any work."

Shel's early responses to reading and writing in the classroom were based on his expectation of teacher direction and evaluation. He knew letters and some sound–letter correspondences, but he wanted to spell everything correctly. He was very tense in interactions where teachers encouraged him to invent spellings based on the sounds he heard, and he used matching strategies and visual memory to handle print in the classroom. In the absence of overt directions, Shel treated suggestions as directions. When Mrs. Benedict concluded a discussion of birds one day by remarking that the children might want to write about birds in their journals, Shel wrote about birds.

With his teachers' support, Shel began to invent spellings based on sound and attempted stories that were both novel and complex. He was eager to share his writing at the authors' circle and wanted very much to publish. He would focus intensely on writing the words, however, and became frustrated when he couldn't keep up with his ideas or read back what he had written. In his frustration, he would write over the words he couldn't read, making subsequent readings even more difficult. Mrs. Benedict had to cover up his writing with her hand one day to get him to write a new line underneath. He was similarly print focused in reading, looking up into space when he came to a word he didn't recognize as if searching his memory for its likeness or looking back to previous pages for the same word. When Mrs. Gundersheim tried to get him to focus on predicting meaning from the context by covering the words with her hand, he pushed her hand away, saying, "I read it [this story] before. I forgot some of the words."

As Shel's writing became more organized and therefore easier to read back, and, as his memory store of known story texts increased, his tension was reduced in writing and reading as long as he was working with material he felt competent to handle with both fluency and accuracy. He was more willing at home than at school to forego the requirement of accuracy, reading to his teddy bear by making up a story to the pictures in a book and scribble writing a letter to a friend to show he could write as fast as his mom. He even wrote a story at home which he made into a book and brought into school to share before he published a book in the classroom.

Even as his real competence in reading and writing increased, Shel's

focus was on tangible outcomes and avoiding error. He became even more intent on publishing after his first book was published, wanting to publish before he had even completed a story. When questions were asked about his story in conferences or authors' circle, he reinterpreted what he had written to avoid the implication that there was any fault in his writing. When he was asked in the writing interview what he wrote, he wanted to get his published books to show Mr. Sullivan, the interviewer, and when he was asked if he liked to write, he said, "Yes, a lot. (Why?) Because when school is over my mother will see all these stories written down in journals."

Similarly, when reading with a teacher, he chose texts that he knew he could read easily; and when asked to read more difficult texts, he would read the whole page over if he discovered that he had made a mistake. After he had difficulty reading an unfamiliar text with Jean McClellan, he told her that he could read fifth-grade books. He also told her, though, that he preferred reading his own writing over text "written by another man." In the reading interview, he answered the question about how he learned to read by saying, "I learned by myself, my mom didn't help me. I was just reading in a book and I knew all the right words in the book." Earlier in the year he had told Jean that he had been reading since he was 4, that he had taught himself with the *TV Guide* and that his sister didn't help him.

In my end-of-year interview with his parents, Shel's bravado about his reading ability was shown to be a cover for his insecurity about competence when they reported that "he keeps wondering when he's going to learn to read" in school. His mother guessed that he was looking for the traditional trappings of reading instruction like reading groups and flashcards. She said that he wanted to be able to just sit and read like his older sister; instead he had to ask for help and his sister complained about his reading out loud. He had even checked some books out of the library like the ones his sister was reading. "He wants to do what she can do," his mother said, "which is good to an extent, but I don't want him to be frustrated."

Given Shel's orientation toward literacy, frustration seemed inevitable. He had a strong sense of story, a storehouse of information and curiosity for more, and intense concentration for solving problems, but his need to be both fluent and accurate in reading and writing kept him from using these resources to learn about written language in a way that was consistent with his teachers' pedagogical assumptions. Shel's preschool experience and his interactions with his sister had led him to expect school to be a teacher-directed workplace where the teacher's instruction would instill in him the knowledge he needed to read and write, yet he asserted more than once as a matter of apparent pride that he had not had any help learning to read from his mother or his sister. This may have reflected a resistance to female domination

and a definition of work as a male domain where self-reliance was valued. Such an interpretation is consistent with Chodorow's (1978) description of the social and psychological dynamics of boys' development as emphasizing autonomy and achievement.

Shel's drive for competence appeared to be rooted in family dynamics around literacy that involved gender and work relations. Even though his father chose to participate in both interviews with me and clearly was knowledgeable about and interested in his son's literacy learning, most of the family stories of shared reading and writing activities involved Shel's mother. She did not treat literacy as adult-regulated work in her interactions with Shel, and this was the only context where he treated literacy at all playfully. He seemed to treat his work at literacy in school as a way of earning his mother's pride in him, consistent with Chodorow's description of boys as "turn[ing] their lives into a search for a success that will both prove their independence and win their mother" (1978, p. 188). Shel's mother appeared to accept his claims of reading prowess without challenge or correction, unlike his sister. But Shel's need to prove himself equal to his sister in competence left him always running to catch up. Arnie also seemed to feel pressure to catch up with siblings, but he responded to it in a different way.

Arnie

Arnie's learning biography shows fluctuations between anxious hesitation and momentary engagement, between fleeting success and disappointed retreat from literacy activities. He was very shy with me at the beginning of my visit with him at home and wouldn't let his mother leave; but once she was called away by a sibling, he got involved in showing me his Legos and the space and super hero characters he played with. He wrote his friend Jack's name for me, then *mom* and *dad* and his own name, erasing frequently to correct letter formation and commenting on the quality of his letters. His mother later said that she had not noticed any concern on his part about letter formation, nor did she call errors to his attention. He did want to spell words correctly, though, she said, and asked for spellings rather than trying to figure them out.

In sharing his own books with me and selecting from mine, Arnie showed a preference for informational books, listening as I read and commenting on the pictures. His mother told me that he liked to be read to and that she thought she had read to him more than to his older brother and sister. She had expected Arnie to be interested in school because of his older siblings, but she noted that they, especially his brother, had been telling him how horrible school was. He would play school only when his

older sister made him, she said; and when his mother had told him he would probably learn to read in school, he had said he didn't want to.

Our interview was interrupted twice, once by a complaint from Arnie that his older brother wouldn't play with him, which prompted his mother's intervention, and later by Arnie and his sister sharing a drawing of his on which she had written. Arnie's mother's response focused on her spelling errors. It was apparent that Arnie wanted to be included in his siblings' activities and that even if his mother did not emphasize the correctness of Arnie's reading and writing, he did witness her attention to these matters with his siblings. Although Arnie had playful interactions around written language with his mother, his expectations of school literacy activities did not include pleasure or self-regulation.

Arnie began the kindergarten year with a strong interest in stories and books and some productive strategies for dealing with print. He matched signs and labels with models and was comfortable spelling from sound to label his drawings as long as he was working with a teacher. He even incorporated writing into his play, making an announcement one day in the drama area about his written signs for his camper, "This is gonna be fun with a license plate on the front and the back." He seemed to enjoy literacy interactions with peers and with teachers, although he was often shy in one-on-one interactions with adults.

As reading and writing became the currency of the classroom, however, and especially as his best friends Jack and George became more engaged in literacy, Arnie depended more on the support of teachers and peers to sustain him. He was drawing more elaborate pictures and trying to write more elaborate stories, but he borrowed his ideas from George and Jack and consulted with them about spelling. He wrote about a knight as George was writing the knight story that became the first published book in the class, and Arnie was one of the first to check it out and take it home. But when Jack published *The Seventy Truck*, Arnie reported the event to his mother in tears. On a midyear questionnaire about home literacy activities, she wrote, "Someday he'd like to write a story and be published, but he's not sure what he'll write about."

Arnie became quite intense about writing, stopped responding to other children's writing at the authors' circle, and tried to persuade his friends not to share their writing. At Mrs. Benedict's invitation, he finally completed and published a story called *The Seven Racing Car*, which seemed to be modeled on Jack's published book. He was beginning to focus on print in reading his own and other stories, but he erased his own writing when he couldn't read it and stared in long pauses at unknown words in books. His mother reported that he was sounding words out at home, but he seemed to rely primarily on his memory of sight words and familiar texts at school.

The accomplishment of publishing seemed to make Arnie more com-

fortable with writing, and he began to write about his own topics, such as a space shuttle landing, and to share at authors' circle again. He had difficulty integrating his attention to print and to story in both writing and reading back his writing, however, and retreated to safer, repetitious writing. When he was asked in the writing interview about how he had learned to write, he described his attention to peers: "I saw Jack start to write. I got out my journal when everyone else was getting their journal and started writing, and that's how I learned." His reading, even of Jack's very familiar published book, was labored and unsure; he tried to sound words out, but the sounds didn't get him to words and he refused to skip words. He didn't seem to enjoy reading at all and told Jean McClellan one day that he didn't like to read books because he didn't know the words. He refused to read even his own writing to her. In the reading interview he said that his mother had taught him to read and that his mother, dad, brother, sister, and Jack were all good readers. He did say that reading was fun "'cause when you read a book you learn, then you know how to read it."

In the final parent interview, his mother said that he was writing on his own in a journal at home and was more willing to take risks in spelling. He would still ask whether it was grown-up spelling, though, and got upset if she said it wasn't. He was very proud of his published book and wanted to share it with all his relatives. He was sounding out isolated words from signs and books, but he would not try to read stories. He preferred being read to and became frustrated or silly when she asked him to read. He was very interested in nonfiction, because his brother was bringing home only nonfiction to read.

Arnie appeared to be pulled in different directions about literacy in negotiating social relations in his family and in the classroom. He wanted to be like his siblings and to be included in their activities, but he withdrew in situations where he didn't believe he could be their equal and took pleasure instead in stories and literacy play with his mother. In the classroom he was comfortable as long as he felt that he and his peers were equals either in play or in their ability to meet their teachers' expectations. When he perceived that his peers had become more competent readers and writers, however, he became anxious and competitive. He lost confidence and tried to imitate their work or retreated to easier tasks that he could manage but that did not measure up to his standards of success.

The tensions Arnie experienced seemed to be related to a division between literacy practices associated with intimacy with his mother and those associated with performance in school and with peers. While his mother provided a model of pleasurable literacy activity

(she wrote plays for children which were performed locally) as well as pleasurable literacy interactions with him. his older siblings both described and enacted school-based perceptions of literacy as imposed and unpleasant work. Arnie's mother indirectly reinforced the messages of his siblings about the emphasis of school literacy on correctness and adult direction and evaluation. His father appeared to provide models of other pleasurable activities related to science and the outdoors, but not specifically connected to literacy. Even though Mrs. Benedict wanted Arnie to ground his literacy learning in the play-interests shared with his parents, everything in Arnie's experience told him that school literacy was work and peer relations were competitive. Arnie responded to these dynamics with apparent ambivalence about leaving behind the warmth and pleasure of the literacy connection with his mother for the more 'grown-up' pressures and demands of school and male peers, withdrawing when he did not feel he could measure up. For Leo, on the other hand, there was no overt ambivalence about literacy; he seemed to have already conceded failure in the quest for competence.

Leo

I did not visit Leo at home before school began, but I interviewed his father at the school in early November. He was already coming to school for a conference with his daughter's teacher which his wife could not attend because of her work schedule. His own academic work schedule was more flexible. When I asked what Leo liked to do, his father replied, "Not read. He likes to be read to, very much so, every night practically. He insists on Mom usually. If Mom is not around, then Dad is ok. He insists on being read at least one story." He continued to describe Leo's literacy development, "He's not very advanced. I don't know how he compares, but our daughter at this age was fluent, reading very well." Only when I repeated my question about what Leo liked to do did he describe Leo's favorite outdoor activities, concluding, "So he is not at this point at all the academic type of kid who is into books or reading or writing."

Leo had already completed a kindergarten program in a nursery school daycare setting, but he was not judged ready to enter first grade. Although his father said he was not too worried at this point and may have overstated the case, he repeatedly described Leo as not very intelligent or verbal, in explicit comparison to his older sister, "who was much smarter at this age or even earlier." She had tried to teach him letters or words, but he didn't seem to enjoy it much, treating it as a job or task. It was clear from his father's descriptions, however, that Leo enjoyed the cozy bedtime readings

with his mother and treated them as special times of closeness with her. Surrounded by a highly literate family, Leo began kindergarten as a happy listener to stories with no confidence that he could enter the world of literacy in any other way. Nothing he did could measure up to his sister's past accomplishments, much less her present competence.

Leo's lack of confidence was apparent in verbal activities in the classroom. When he was called on in group discussions after waving his hand for a turn, he either shrank back shyly and said nothing or blurted out a quick comment. He was nervous when he was the center of attention in literacy activities, whether in a group or in conference with a teacher, but he listened in on conferences with other children and began to pick up strategies for dealing with written language. He often drew and wrote about space wars but did not borrow his ideas from peers; and although his oral stories about his pictures were not elaborate, they suggested that he had more in mind than he was telling. With adult support, he would attend to the sounds of the words he wanted to write, often spelling words on the basis of final or other salient sounds rather than initial sounds. He appeared surprised at his own accomplishment, asking one day after writing with Mrs. Gundersheim, "Is that it?" He seemed doubtful that what he was doing could actually be all there was to writing. He did not attend to print at all in reading, guessing the meaning of classroom print from context and looking at the pictures in books in the library area.

Over time Leo's confidence grew. He began to sustain writing on his own after working with a teacher, then to initiate writing without adult support. He did not share his writing in the authors' circle, but he asked astute questions about other children's writing. When Mrs. Benedict showed his father Leo's journal in a midyear parent teacher conference, he could not believe it was Leo's writing he was seeing. Leo was now attending more closely to environmental print in the classroom; he also began to read familiar texts from memory by using the pictures, and he made up stories from the pictures in unfamiliar texts.

As Leo became increasingly comfortable as a writer, he developed a new presence in the classroom. He began to borrow storylines from peers and to share his writing in the authors' circle. He sustained topics over several days; and when Mrs. Benedict invited him to complete one of his stories for publication, he worked steadily to finish his story entitled *The Mouse and the Dad and the House*, based in part on the book *Mouse House* he had checked out of the library. Although he still had some difficulties fully recording and retrieving what he wanted to write, when he shared his published book in the authors' circle, he was attending closely to the print and successfully read his own story. Over the year his drawings and handwriting became larger and bolder, as did his themes, incorporat-

ing adventure action and violence. When he was interviewed about writing, he said he wrote "because I like to write pictures because then I know what to write." Asked how he had learned to write, he said, "I just tried and tried again." He said he was a good writer and identified a male peer, Shel, as another good writer.

Although Leo also became more comfortable as a reader, he did so with less apparent engagement in reading than in writing. He described Mrs. Benedict's private reading room in the supply closet as "warm and cozy," but he clearly preferred reading his own writing to reading books. When he attended closely to the print, he often made predictions based on context, then balked if the print didn't match his prediction. He moved to sounding words out and often ended up reading nonsense unless he felt free to abandon his focus on print and make up stretches of the story, as he did when reading with Jean McClellan. When he was interviewed about reading, he defined it in terms of letters and sounding out and said he liked to read "because it's useful 'cause if another guy knows how to read and you don't, ha, ha, I can read." When he was asked how he learned to read, he said, "Easy books, like easy words." The contrast to his emphasis on his own thought and effort when he described learning to write was telling, as was his identification of female peers—Roberta and Beverly— as good readers.

Leo's writing rather than his reading was the major focus of my home interview with his mother at the end of the year. Since the interview was in the evening, Leo was there and wanted to read me his second published book, *The Dad and the Boy*. His presence and his father's absence made it difficult to follow up on the issues that had been raised in the earlier interview with his father, and I later discovered that my tape recorder had malfunctioned and left me without a record of our conversation.

It had clearly been a year in which Leo's sense of himself as a reader and writer had changed enormously. He had entered the classroom with an orientation toward literacy which discouraged him from believing, as his teachers did, that he could learn to read and write through his own interests and problem solving. He was even less sure that his teachers could teach him how to read and write in more directive ways. But he was willing to pursue his own interests in drawing and accept his teachers' encouragement of efforts to write, and his success in writing led him to reading. Although he gained confidence in his competence in both activities, he remained more skittish in reading, emphasizing aspects of skill and performance over engagement in problemsolving or pleasure in story. He did still enjoy stories, but more in the hearing than in the reading. His interview

responses suggested a gender dichotomy in his perception: reading was the province of girls, writing of boys.

The dynamics of Leo's literacy learning in the classroom were connected to the negotiation of social relations in his family. Even though Leo's father was involved in reading to his son and was willing to be more involved, Leo preferred to share this activity with his mother. He may have felt more pressure to perform with his father and, like Arnie, may have sensed that his own reading threatened the bedtime reading closeness with his mother that he was not ready to give up. It was as if he could enter a more grown-up male world through writing, but remain a "Mommy's boy," as his father had earlier called him, in reading. Leo's identification of reading as a female activity may also have been connected to his relations with his older sister. He may have believed that reading competence was more elusive and still beyond his grasp because it was the turf on which his competence was measured against his sister's. Issues of competence also played an important part in Don's learning biography, where literacy seemed irrelevant to his primary concern.

Don

Don's major agenda in the classroom was acceptance by male peers in the social arena of play. I had not visited Don at home; when I interviewed his mother there in November, she described kindergarten as his entry into a larger social world where he had ready access to male peers for the first time. His neighborhood and his small preschool had offered only girls as playmates; and while Don had enjoyed playing with his older sister and other girls his own age, his mother said he was now interested in forming friendships with boys. When his piggy bank had recently become full, he took the money to the toy store and quickly chose two cars, one for himself and one for Arnie to play with when he came over.

Literacy activities were shared with both parents. His mother described their reading times with Don—hers under the quilt after school, and his father's in a big lounge chair at bedtime—as "quiet, reflective, cuddly." Don enjoyed these intimate family readings and did not want them turned into lessons about how print works, she said. His preschool had included directed teaching of the alphabet, and his mother said Don could recognize the letters of the alphabet but not write all of them. She had debated about teaching him to write and had tried it a couple of times; but when it seemed difficult for him, she did not press it. She later told me that her brother had had trouble learning to read, and that there had been a lot of

pressure on him. "I try it on and if it seems very hard for them, it can wait," she said of her approach with her children.

Don had also experienced formal literacy instruction as part of a "club" led by his sister and her friends, in which they played school and taught Don from workbooks. His mother reported that he had entered into the play willingly during the summer as a way of learning what school would be like; but once kindergarten began, he didn't want to do it anymore. When Don wrote letters to people, he drew pictures and wrote his name; he did not want his mother to write for him or tell him how to write. She believed that Don would learn to read and write quickly when he was ready, just as he had learned to ride his bicycle quickly after ignoring it for a long time. She expected him to spend the fall adjusting to all the social changes kindergarten brought and said she would be a little worried if other things didn't take off in the spring.

Don's mother's prediction about his focus in the classroom during the fall proved quite accurate. He was more interested in figuring out how male friendships worked than in figuring out how print worked. He seemed to have few resources for dealing with the print around the room and generally ignored it. During writing time he drew houses or flowers every day and wrote only with a teacher's guidance. His responses to his teachers' questions about what sounds he heard were so minimal that they wondered if he had a hearing problem. He did not use peers as resources for either topics or spelling although he observed them closely. The one literacy activity he appeared to enjoy was being read to.

By December Don was interacting more with peers during writing time, and he shared his work readily in the authors' circle. He began to choose new topics for his drawings and to come up with sound-based spellings when conferring with a teacher. He gradually started writing more on his own and moved on to the adventure topics that were popular with his male peers. In February his mother reported that he was inventing spellings for signs at home and told her that he would give the books he was making at school to his relatives. He also became more willing to engage in reading activities, flipping through books on his own and reading familiar texts from memory. He did not believe that he could read, though, claiming even at the sign-up board that he couldn't read it. His mother reported that he was sounding out single words at home, however, and listed many examples of his engagement with print.

As spring came, Don's interest in writing was driven by its social rewards. He had gained acceptance from male peers in the classroom and seemed to try to retain it by following and not challenging their lead. His engagement in writing depended on interaction with male peers; he

borrowed topics from them and wanted to share in the authors' circle even when he had done no writing. He was not interested in switching from the daily journal format to story writing until Mrs. Benedict told him he needed to do that to publish. Still he showed no inclination to complete a piece of writing and told Mrs. Gundersheim one day that he was too little for this stuff.

Don's mother became concerned that he was not publishing, and during the April school vacation she and Don published three books at home which were a combination of Don's dictation to her and his own writing. He was pleased with these books but refused to bring them to school to share. She wasn't sure whether it was because he had done them with her or because he didn't want to "let the cat of the bag" by showing his teachers and friends that he could do this. After that Don showed no interest in publishing in school, although he wrote more complete pieces, was proud of his writing, and continued to share in the authors' circle. In the writing interview Don said that he wrote every day in the afternoon, implying that he wrote at home; and when asked why he wrote, he said, "Because then I can have some stories that I could read to myself."

The connection between writing and reading was indeed strong for Don. He read his own writing with much more fluency than he read other texts because he could integrate attention to print and message. When reading books, he seemed to rely mostly on a limited sight vocabulary. He could repeat the other strategies he had been taught, but he didn't appear to use pictures, skip words, or sound them out. He would simply stop and say, "I can't read that word." He had developed more successful strategies for dealing with print around the classroom, however, perhaps because it was more important socially. And he was quite successful at reading his own texts in the authors' circle. In the reading interview, Don reported, "I can read stuff I make at home. My mom sews a book for me and I write. Then I read that." And when Jean McClellan asked him how he learned to read, he said, "Writing, that kind of learns me how to read . . . because if I write and I know what it says because I knew from the time that I was writing what it was." When Don was asked in the reading interview if he thought he was a good reader, he replied, "A little bit. I mean, I never thought I was a good reader. (Did anyone ever tell you that?) My sister. She likes to tease me."

In the June interview Don's mother said, "My husband and I both see it, a deepening of his interests. We are both very pleased. We can see similarities between his beginning to collect his reading readiness in the same way [his sister] did." She described a breakthrough in her reading to him with Judy Blume's book *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*. This was the first time he had been interested in a chapter book without pictures; he

loved the story and even wanted to read the baby talk which was in boldface print. If she tried to direct his attention to the print, however, he reponded, "I don't want to do that." Don's mother continued, "Both of my kids are only interested in reading as it applies to obtaining the content of something. As a feat in itself, they're not interested." She believed that Don was doing what his sister had also done, "withholding his skills" so that he could continue to be read to and not be "put on the spot" to read himself. He was more interested in numbers than in reading, she said, and had also turned into "this incredible raconteur" like other male relatives who got big laughs for their colorful story telling. Although she described herself as waiting patiently until Don was ready to learn new things, she also said, "I may be a little overbearing. My husband and I both have a sense of the way things are supposed to be. And [Don and his sister] may have a feeling they should take their direction from somebody else." As she described her plans for his summer activities, it was clear that she had a vision of what he needed and saw her role as seeking out and providing the experiences which would shape his growth.

In Don's mother's vision of his growth, issues related to gender were important. Although she compared Don's literacy learning to his sister's, she was most interested in the similarities in process not the disparity in achievement. She described Don's progress as being about 6 months behind his sister's at the same age, but this did not prompt her to focus on literacy activities with him. In fact, just as her early expectations for his learning in kindergarten involved the development of male friendships, her summer plans for him focused on the development of physical confidence. His sister, on the other hand, was going to receive tutoring on math skills over the summer. Don's mother mentioned the possibility of sexism in her perception of their relative needs. Reading needs were similarly differentiated. Don's sister had identified strongly with Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* books, which her mother described as "sweeter than life"; Don, she thought, needed something "larger than life," something "heroic" to identify with.

Although Don's participation in family literacy events seemed compatible with his teachers' assumptions about literacy learning, Don had other agendas for social relations in the classroom and was already practiced in resisting his mother's attempts to encourage his reading and writing in their shared literacy activities. Both of Don's parents treated reading as a pleasurable activity with him, but it was associated with times of quiet intimacy, not with the expression of prowess through physical action or social storytelling. The latter were regarded as masculine characteristics in Don's development; his

mother explicitly excluded literacy from this category when she offered as a reason for Don's not wanting to share the books he wrote at home the idea that he wanted to preserve a "more macho persona" at school.

Thus Don initially regarded the pleasure of literacy as a private affair that had little to do with his more active play or with the public displays of literacy that were expected in school. As he attended to his agenda of negotiating relations with male peers in the classroom, Don paid little attention to literacy. But literacy eventually became part of his activity, because it was one form of social currency among peers. Writing, especially, was an arena for social bonding and competition among the boys. Don seemed interested in gaining access to the arena, not in dominating it; he wanted to be competent enough to participate in the social interactions around writing, not to test his mettle against the competence of others. Don's greater interest in writing may also have been due to the fact that he knew his father had written a book. He was less engaged in reading, perhaps because its social value was lower among the boys in the classroom. Also, like Arnie and Leo, he may have felt that his own competence as a reader threatened the intimacy of shared reading with his mother and father. Those reading times remained a retreat from his new social world with male peers, an opportunity to sustain the earlier world of family intimacy.

Consideration of the learning biographies of Shel, Arnie, Leo, and Don, in addition to those of Jack, Luke, and George, reveals some common sources of tension for boys in negotiating gender relations around literacy. First and foremost, when mothers assume the primary responsibility within the family for children's literacy (as they did in all these families even when fathers were also involved), literacy involves tensions between connectedness and separation in the relationship of mother and son. In standard psychodynamic accounts of development, boys are seen as having a greater need than girls to separate from their mothers in order to establish appropriate gender identification, and autonomy is a highly valued characteristic in cultural definitions of male roles (Chodorow, 1978). This analysis suggests that there is pressure for boys to disassociate themselves from the literacy activities shared with their mothers and little motivation for them to take up literacy themselves as a way of being like their mothers, especially if they are sensitive to the low status assigned to female activities in general.

Boys' separation from their mothers may not be accomplished without ambivalence, however, and in relation to literacy these biographies show that boys often found ways to maintain or renegotiate forms

of intimacy with their mothers through literacy. This is most obvious in cases like Leo's and Don's, where their mother's reading to them remained an occasion for warmth and cuddling, a relationship which may have been threatened by the boys' own reading competence. It is equally true, however, in cases like Shel's, where proving competence in literacy to his mother was a way of sustaining their bond, and Luke's, where resistance was accomplished playfully so that the connection was not broken.

Whether mothers treated literacy activities as work or play also had an impact on boys' negotiation of gender relations. When mothers treated literacy as adult-regulated work, their overt assertion of authority made tensions around separation more salient. Boys responded to these tensions by resisting, as Luke did, or treating literacy as a challenge to their competence, as Jack did. In the latter case, accommodation became a way of striving for the achievement that would please his mother rather than a way of being like her. When mothers treated literacy as children's self-regulated play, there was less reason for tensions around separation, since mothers were supporting their sons' autonomy (even dominance) and assuming their competence. This seemed to be the case for George, whose father was also involved in playful literacy activities with him.

It seems reasonable to expect that boys would be more engaged in literacy when their fathers are also involved in reading and writing with them, but this was not always the case (and in some cases, my data are very meager on the question of father's involvement). Again, literacy may be entangled in tensions commonly present in father–son relations due to their competitive nature, as suggested by standard psychodynamic accounts (Chodorow, 1978), or there may be tensions between competition and connectedness involving literacy. For example, there may be more stringent evaluation of competence going on in father–son relations, as with Leo, or the intimate nature of some father–son literacy activities may define them as outside the bounds of highly valued male activities, as may have been true for Don. This is not to say that both father and son did not enjoy their shared literacy activities, but that both may have registered the low status of such activities within the larger social world. Chodorow (1978) argues that, while girls learn their sense of female identity in close relations with their mothers, boys are more dependent on, and sensitive to, public representations of male identity.

Relations with older siblings often entered into family literacy dynamics as well. (Among the boys, only George had a younger sibling, so there was little opportunity to examine the boys' relations with yonger siblings.) Older brothers, like Jack's and Arnie's, provided male

models of literacy that were perhaps more accessible than the models fathers offered through their work, especially when the younger brother was invited, as Jack was, to participate in literacy activities with the older brothers he emulated. Older sisters, however, often increased the sense of literacy as a female activity, raising the stakes for either resisting literacy, as Luke did, or needing to prove competence, as Shel did. In addition to displaying their own literacy competence, older sisters often acted out the conventional female role of literacy teacher in playing school with their brothers. Even when mothers treated literacy as play, older siblings, especially sisters playing school, took a very directive posture toward their tutees. In some cases the literacy models sisters offered through their own literacy competence and their teaching activities led younger brothers to separate the pleasurable literacy experiences they had with their mothers from the experience of learning to read and write themselves. Leo and Arnie, for example, enjoyed having stories read to them, but were doubtful of their ability to perform competently in what they perceived as the work of learning to read and write.

In general older siblings brought traditional school-based definitions of literacy into the family, preparing younger siblings for reading and writing instruction as adult-regulated work. To the extent that the boys perceived school as a workplace, they may have been inclined toward anxiety about competence. Chodorow (1978) suggests that the necessity for boys to separate emotionally from their mothers, and their relative lack of opportunity to develop identity through relations with adult males, result in a generalized need to achieve in the world of work. This dynamic is also connected by Pitcher and Schultz (1983) to their observations indicating the importance of male peer groups for young boys' development of gender identity. Altogether, these points imply possible sources of tension for boys in play-centered pedagogies regarding the teacher's vaguely defined tasks and diffuse criteria for evaluating achievement versus the negotiation of identity and status in relations with male peers.

It is interesting in this respect to note that, as a group, the boys became more engaged in writing in the classroom than they did in reading. For one thing, writing was a more clearly defined activity in the classroom than reading was; there was a designated writing area, for example, and children were regularly asked to go there for teacher's choice, whereas reading events occurred in many locations and wore many labels. The more diffuse nature of reading instruction was reflected in Shel's belief that reading had not been taught in kinder-

garten. In addition, writing offered many opportunities for interaction with peers, whereas reading was often done with teachers, especially if children did not choose to do it on their own. These differences may have led boys to see writing as their primary work in the classroom and to treat it as a forum for negotiating status and identity with peers.

There may also have been less reason for boys to regard writing as a female or female-sponsored activity, because family gender dynamics around children's literacy learning generally focused on reading. In addition, the boys' preference for writing may have been related to the nature of the activities themselves. Even though reading and writing are both treated as self-regulated activities in play-centered pedagogies, the opportunities for initiative and productivity are not equal. Reading still involves following the lead of the author rather than taking the lead oneself, and it results in a less tangible product. When the cultural definition of male identity emphasizes social dominance and achievement in work, boys may find writing more 'masculine' and satisfying than reading. Correspondingly, the status and rewards to be gained in the larger social world are certainly greater for writing than for reading.

TENSIONS IN GIRLS' LITERACY LEARNING —BEVERLY, LUCILLE, AND SARAH

Although Roberta's biography shows that girls' investment in literacy as a female activity could not be taken for granted in these families, more frequently the tensions in literacy learning for girls were connected to their strong identification with female role models. Consideration of the learning biographies of Beverly, Lucille, and Sarah —in addition to those of Beatrix, Jane, and Roberta—allows a fuller analysis of the gender dynamics of literacy for girls. All three had mothers who both modeled and participated in literacy activities with their daughters. Like Beatrix and Jane, Beverly was the first-born child in her family with one younger sibling. Lucille and Sarah were the youngest in their families; each had an older sister, and Sarah also had an older brother. Thus, these three biographies allow expanded consideration of how girls' relations with both parents and siblings were involved in their construction of orientations toward literacy.

Beverly

Of all the girls in the study, Beverly was the most engaged in traditional female play activities. When I asked her at the beginning of the home visit what kind of play she liked best, she told me she liked to dress up in a white party dress and high heels. She showed me her toy stove and described her pretend cooking and laundry activities. When I was ready to leave, she asked her mother if her room was clean before taking me there to show me her dolls. Later in the parent interview, her mother reported that Beverly loved make-up and fancy clothes (although her mom most often wore dungarees) and taking care of her dolls in playing house.

Beverly showed me several words she knew how to write, including *mommy and dad* and her younger brother's name; she then asked me to write *street* and *horse*. Beverly noticed her rocking horse nearby and decided these two words could be the title of a story which she dictated, read back, and wanted to copy. Her mother said that Beverly had been interested in letters for a long time and that she had taught her daughter the alphabet in a way that was "always fun, part of a game." By the age of 3 Beverly was writing the alphabet and was always more interested in letters than in coloring or drawing. She wrote notes to her mom and dad and to family friends; she also enjoyed playing alphabet games with her mother and her mother's friend. Although she would attempt to spell words on her own, her mother reported, "she doesn't like to make mistakes."

When I asked Beverly to show me her favorite book, she found a Raggedy Ann and Andy book and read it to me with obvious attention to the print and concern for accuracy. I asked her how she had learned to read, and she replied, "I didn't learn, I just picked it up." Her mother explained that she had read to Beverly a lot and that Beverly had memorized books when she was younger, but then one day her mother realized that she could read things she had never seen before. She was now reading cards and letters, signs, and easy books, and she often read to her younger brother. Beverly liked her mother to make up stories at bedtime, but she did not make them up herself for either telling or writing. For Beverly reading and writing were primarily ways of connecting with and being like her mother. Although her mother described Beverly's father as being interested in her literacy, it was apparent from her description of family activities that, during the academic year, his work at the university limited his involvement in the daily routines of parenting.

In the classroom Beverly sought adult attention and participation in her activities and substituted interaction with female peers when she couldn't get as much adult attention as she wanted. She often took on an adult role herself in reading, assisting other children with classroom print and

reading stories to them. Her interest in letters took her to the writing area often for children's choice time. She liked to have company there and often wrote with Beatrix, the two of them sharing topics which usually came from Beatrix. Beverly was eager to have models for spelling as well, copying words from displays of print in the classroom or changing her invented spellings when she noticed the way adults spelled those words. One day after observing her make four attempts to spell *rainbow*, I asked if it bothered her to spell words the way they sounded. She replied, "I have to do it right so my mom knows how to do it." She even changed what she wanted to say that day because she didn't know how to spell a word, leading Mrs. Benedict to tell her that she wasn't expected to spell like an adult, that it was okay to be learning how to spell as a 5 year old.

Following this conversation, Beverly's writing became more risky and expansive, even to the point where it was undecipherable by an adult. She wrote often about her family, but like Beatrix at midyear, she did not sustain a story beyond an opening lead. With Mrs. Benedict's repeated encouragement, she completed and published a story about baby-sitting for her brother. Following that, she tried new forms of writing, moving into fiction by writing a story in which she had a dream and treating her journal as a diary in which to record her activities and feelings with no storyline or drawings. Also, with Mrs. Benedict's encouragement, she attempted to read more challenging books. She was able to read fluently books by Beverly Cleary and Lillian and Russell Hoban, but she often missed the point of the story because she was not worldly wise about children's trickery and mischief. Her mother reported that she was doing lots of reading and writing at home, reading to her brother and trying to read and imitate her mom's cursive. In the classroom she was reaching out to new activities and friendships, but she usually played a teaching or support role. She remained primarily oriented toward adults, assuming adultlike roles with peers.

For the rest of the year, Beverly wrote and published both personal narrative and fiction. She accomplished internal revisions to her stories, making decisions to add and delete material; and she began to use the dictionary to find correct spellings "so I can read my writing," she said. Her topics, even when fictional, centered on her family, as did her reasons for writing. When she was asked in the writing interview why she wrote, she responded, "Let's see, it's fun for me 'cause when I write the books, Mommy is thrilled." Similarly, in response to a question about what made her a good writer, she said, "Mom and Dad really think that because of my books." She also continued to enjoy reading with her teachers at school and with her mother at home, but books were also private entertainment. She told me she read with her mom and her dad, but mostly by herself. In

the reading interview, she responded to a question about when she read with a big smile as she said, "Anytime I want to." She said she liked to read "because it's fun, *really* fun."

In the parent interview at the end of the year, her mother reported that although Beverly was reading on her own, they continued to enjoy reading together, especially the Beverly Cleary books. Both mother and daughter had been delighted with Beverly's published books, and Beverly was writing stories at home about family activities. Although she enjoyed school, her mother described her as coming home "as grumpy as a bear," presumably taxed by her effort to do things right and to negotiate her newly important relations with peers.

For Beverly, her teachers' treatment of literacy as children's self-regulated play shifted the focus of literacy activities away from interaction with adults. She was used to treating reading and writing as play with her mother, a kind of 'dress-up' play in which she played an adult role. She looked to adults to model appropriate behavior, which she imitated then sought adult reaction to. Although she had considerable knowledge about and interest in literacy, her strategies kept her dependent on adults to an extent that was not supported in the kindergarten classroom. Her teachers expected her to rely more on her own resources and those of her peers.

Beverly responded to this tension between autonomy and dependence by taking on an adult role herself, teaching, mothering, supporting and assisting others, just as she did in reading to her younger brother at home. This adult role, learned in relations with her mother, emphasized culturally valued female qualities of nurturance and accommodation, helping others solve their problems and reach their goals rather than defining her own goals and solving her own problems. Thus while Beverly's interaction and identification with her mother certainly supported her early acquisition of literacy skills, it also defined the nature of literacy as women's domestic work and play oriented toward nurturance and not toward her own productivity. Lucille also experienced tensions around autonomy and dependence in literacy learning that were connected to her relations with her older sister.

Lucille

The importance of Lucille's older sister in her literacy learning was indicated by both Lucille and her mother in my conversations with them. During the home visit Lucille began writing for me by drawing a clown that

she said her sister had taught her to draw. She wrote her name and a list of words including *cat*, *sat*, and *fat*. When I asked her how she had learned to write, she replied that her mom, dad, and sister had taught her, then reiterated that her sister had taught her. Her mother later said that Lucille's older sister would write something and Lucille "would just write it," copying "whatever she sees."

When I asked Lucille to show me her favorite book, she read *Are You My Mother?* attending to the print and skipping the "hard ones." When I asked how she had learned to read, she said she knew some easy words and her sister helped her with the rest. Her mother said of Lucille's reading, "I think a lot of it has come from playing with her older sister and her friends." Her mother explained that she had been more directly involved in Lucille's older sister's reading, but her work as a teacher had limited the time she spent with Lucille. (She had recently resigned her position to spend more time with her children.) For Lucille, she said, reading was a way of being part of family activities, playing games like Monopoly and Boggle, which her sister had played with her more often than her parents. Lucille's mother described the relationship between the two girls in this way: "Well, [Lucille's older sister] plays sort of a surrogate mother role, but sometimes she gets into the teacher-pupil, moreso than she used to. Before it was just, you know, playing.... [Lucille's older sister] has been her focal point." In comparison to her older sister, her mother described Lucille as less verbal, "she responds, but she doesn't initiate."

This was also a good description of Lucille's behavior in the classroom. She was generally quiet in group meetings, listening to stories with apparent pleasure and participating when reading was involved. At children's choice time she regularly chose writing, partly because she enjoyed drawing and writing, but it also appeared to be a safe choice that did not require negotiating new kinds of peer relationships. She sometimes engaged in cheerful conversation with other girls while writing, but often she ignored peers altogether. She drew elaborate pictures in the style she had learned from her sister and labeled them in sentence strings of invented spelling. She liked "back and forth" writing when teachers responded to her writing with written notes, and she showed a sense of fun in her responses. One day she had written, "The girl is thinking about a pig." When Mrs. Gundersheim wrote back, "Why is the girl thinking about a pig?" she wrote, "She wants to eat some bacon." In general she seemed to be staying on the comfortable ground of the literacy strategies she had developed at home with her sister.

By midyear, however, Lucille was reaching for new ground, apparently prompted by her sister's literacy activities as well as those of female peers. She stopped drawing pictures in her journal and began writing Dr. Seuss-

like poems, reporting that her sister was writing poems. She said she wanted to make a book like the ones her sister had, "all animals, no pictures," but she did not show any real interest in publishing. She also announced that she could read books without pictures and attempted to read the Beverly Cleary book that Beverly was reading at the time. She had begun to focus on sounding out unfamiliar words instead of skipping them, but her efforts were often unsuccessful and interfered with her comprehension.

As she began to pose new problems, Lucille often found herself without ready solutions. After a period of writing songs and rhymes from a play in which her sister was performing, she ran out of topics and told Mrs. Benedict she didn't know what to write about. Among the topics she insisted she wouldn't write about was cats, the subject of a story Mrs. Benedict was writing and sharing with the class. But Lucille did begin a story about her kitten that she shared at the authors' circle—a rare performance for her—and published. She was better able to deal with difficulties in writing than in other activities, however, and frequently cried when she encountered problems in other tasks. She told her mother that she liked only writing and cooking, that other classroom activities were too simple.

After the publication of *My Kitten*, Lucille wrote mostly personal narrative, completing several stories which she enjoyed sharing with teachers but not at the authors' circle. Her favorites were those she thought were funny. Her responses in the writing interview did not reflect her enjoyment of writing, however. When she was asked why she wrote, she said, "Teachers want us to write. (Why?) To be good at writing." And when she was asked whether she liked to write, she replied, "No, 'cause I always get tired." These responses may have come out of her conversations with Roberta and Sarah; both girls were coming to her house for afternoon childcare, and Lucille's mother reported that their activities had shifted from writing to reading and that in discussions of first grade they were describing Mr. Sullivan's class in negative terms as having "just journals." At this point, Lucille may truly have been tired of limiting her own choices to writing and cooking even though she had enjoyed them.

The reading that the girls were doing after school involved a considerable amount of competition around the reading of "thick books." These Lucille could read but not understand very well until she found some of her sister's old books that she could enjoy. In the reading interview, she said that she read "big books, my mom's books" and that she liked to read "so you can learn more." Interestingly, she identified Sarah as a good reader even though Sarah was considerably less proficient than she was. This may have been out of loyalty to her friend, but she may also have been taken in by Sarah's skills as a social organizer and bluffer.

In the end of year interview, Lucille's mother described her as doing less writing than she had earlier in the year. Of her reading, she said, "We're not reading as much to her now as she reads to us.... It's become so much a part of her. It's just something that she does and seems to enjoy." She described Lucille and her older sister reading together at bedtime and reported that Lucille's older sister "credits herself with teaching Lucille how to read" by doing the same things with Lucille as her mother had done with her. Her older sister supported more than Lucille's reading, however. According to her mother, Lucille would not go out to play with the neighborhood children unless her sister went with her. Lucille was outgoing only if she was the youngest in the group. Then, her mother said, "she wants to be the center of attraction; when it's her own peers, it's quite different." Her mother saw Lucille's quick tears as a ploy to get what she wanted when things were not going her way.

Lucille's attachment to her sister, like Beverly's attachment to her mother, encouraged her dependence on the attention and problem-solving support of older females. While both aspired to adult behavior in literacy, their responses to the classroom expectation of greater independence varied. Beverly sought out adult attention and assumed adultlike roles in interacting with peers; but Lucille was not used to seeking adult attention and retreated into safe choices, responding with 'little sister' helplessness to frustration. Because her sister was both peer and 'surrogate mother' to her, Lucille may not have felt the same need to separate from her that young girls usually feel toward their mothers. When reading and writing on her own, Lucille followed her sister's model; but in social situations, she acted like a little sister who expected attention and support. This behavior is consistent with Bank and Kahn's (1982) description of the 'umbrella' of a caregiving sibling as often fostering sustained dependence on the sibling to mediate between oneself and the world. Lucille's interaction and identification with her sister fostered literacy learning but led her to treat literacy as a largely private form of entertainment.

It is interesting that Lucille expressed negative feelings about writing just at the point when she was taking more risks and finding her own topics with apparent comfort. The explanation for this is not clear, but it may indicate tensions about any of a variety of issues: frustration with the limits imposed on her activities by her dependency, anxiety around the increasing initiative she was taking in writing, or discomfort about the prospect of having a male teacher who was associated with writing. In claiming reading as a female activity, Lucille and her friends may have been acknowledging the claim that the boys, and Mr. Sullivan, were making on writing. In general,

Lucille's helplessness and her expression of some hostility are consistent with Walkerdine's (1985) description of the ways girls respond to the contradiction between valued qualities of learners within an invisible pedagogy and valued qualities of females within the larger culture. In Sarah's case, relations with older siblings around literacy were also important but led to an orientation toward literacy that was quite different from Lucille's.

Sarah

For Sarah, literacy was almost entirely a social display, a tool for establishing her status as the equal of her siblings and a leader of her peers. I had not visited Sarah at home before school began; and when I asked her mother in the parent interview what Sarah liked to do, she replied, "She likes to follow her older brother and sister, for one thing. She likes to ride bikes. She very much likes to draw and pretend that she's writing. [Her older sister] keeps a journal, and I keep a journal, too. She has her own two little journals that she sits and writes very fast in trying to keep up with us." Sarah's mother had submitted manuscripts to be considered for publication, and Sarah had observed her mother and older siblings work on a writing project together. She had been taught the alphabet in preschool in a way that "just kind of fit into what they were doing," according to her mother. Most of the time Sarah wrote strings of letters without spelling out words, and often she scribbled because it went faster.

Her mother reported that Sarah enjoyed being read to. Her favorites were poetic books and folk and fairy tales. Her mother always read to Sarah first at bedtime, then read something appropriate for all three children. She said Sarah had not shown much interest in sounding out words, but she did memorize stories and read them to younger children. The only time Sarah really wanted to be able to read, in her mother's judgment, was when they all got letters from her grandparents and she had to ask someone to read hers instead of being able to read it privately. Her older brother had had a bad experience in school, fallen behind, and lost interest in reading for a while; this had disappointed Sarah's mother because, she said, "reading is so much a part of our family." She worried that Sarah might not apply herself in school. "She's a great little organizer, she's a great little leader" she said. "And part of it . . . I think is partly a cover up. If she doesn't know something, it's easy just to bluff her way through it." Her mother thought that Sarah wanted "life to be a breeze" and had told her that school wasn't "all play time."

Sarah began the kindergarten year using the literacy strategies her mother described her as using at home. She drew colorful pictures of

houses, trees, and flowers in her journal, then wrote strings of letters which she identified as "just writing," naming the letters if she was asked what it said. In mid-November she began sounding to spell words, following an interchange with me in the drama area. Her make-believe play had been interrupted when her companion was called out of the room for some reason, and she drafted me to fill in for him. At one point I suggested she make a sign as part of our play, and instead of spelling for her I repeated the words so she could listen to the sounds. After that she used sound as a basis for her spelling in her journal, but her concentration was more focused and sustained if she was working with an adult.

Similarly, when classroom reading tasks required attention to print, Sarah usually asked for adult assistance. But in interactions with peers, she put on displays of reading competence. She liked to read to others, carefully choosing children who she knew couldn't read and selecting books where she knew the story. When she went to the library area with Lucille, she pretended to read silently the kinds of books Lucille was reading. Giving the appearance of being a competent reader and writer allowed Sarah to bid for leadership in social interactions. At the writing table one day, she suggested playing school; Roberta and Luke predictably bowed out, but Lucille agreed to play Sarah's pupil even though Lucille was the more competent reader and writer.

At midyear Sarah thrived at the authors' circle, seeming to enjoy the chance to perform for an audience. But she was not enjoying writing much. She was competitive with Lucille about filling pages in her journal; and although she could transcribe sounds to spell easily now, she often could not read what she had written. Nevertheless she chose writing for children's choice, saying that her mother wanted her to go there more often. Finally Mrs. Benedict asked her to make other choices during children's choice time and she relaxed somewhat about writing. She began to write with Beverly, borrowing topics and asking her for spellings. Although she described her pieces as stories, the pages were only loosely connected in topic and sentences were often abandoned midstream. If she read her pieces as written at the authors' circle, her audience did not understand them, so she sometimes made up new stories as she shared. It became very important to her to publish, though, so she chose a story she had started about Cinderella and completed it with the assistance of her teachers.

If Sarah's attention during writing and reading with peers seemed overly focused on fluency, it was overly focused on accuracy in her reading interactions with adults. Following her use of sound as a basis for spelling, she began to try to sound out words in reading. At first she kept this in balance with her sense of story, but she had a hard time attending to both.

Her reading became more labored, and she struggled with the print even when she had made good predictions based on story sense. This emphasis on accuracy was more pronounced when she read with teachers than when she read with other adults. She continued to read her own writing from memory and sense, not verbatim.

By late spring Sarah had become engaged in her own topics in writing and seemed better able to orchestrate her attention to the task and to the audience. She sustained work on a fictional story, about a family that lived in a tree house, through several conferences with teachers and sharings at the authors' circle to final publication. Perhaps her relative freedom in writing was related to its diminished social importance in her female peer network, where reading had become the prized currency. When Sarah was asked in the writing interview why she wrote, she shrugged and said, "To learn how to read"; and when she was asked what she would like to do better as a writer, she replied, "I want to be a reader more than a writer."

Sarah was competitive with Beverly, Roberta, and Lucille about reading, pretending to read the chapter books they were reading. Her print-focused reading was very labored and she began to avoid occasions to read with adults. In the reading interview she said she read Little Bear and Frog and Toad stories and "that's all." She identified Beverly, Roberta, and Lucille as good readers; and when she was asked why she read, she looked up to the ceiling and said, "I don't know. Yes, I do. When I'm in first grade or second grade, I can read big books." Yet her reading had improved a great deal. On the print awareness survey administered in June, she missed only one item and actually read the text herself despite the distortions.

In the parent interview, Sarah's mother described her as more willing to take risks in writing than in reading. She was writing stories at home while the older children did their homework. Sometimes she copied from a favorite book, but often she wrote on her own and invented spellings. Although her mother and Sarah were reading a lot together and Sarah continued to love to be read to, her mother reported that Sarah was not reading much by herself. She was more persistent if she had chosen to read herself than if her mother asked her to. "I think she wishes that it was something magic," her mother said, "that a fairy godmother would come and bonk her with a wand and she'd be able to read. She doesn't—I don't think she really wants to put a tremendous lot of effort into it right now." Just as she pretended to read like more proficient peers, she also pretended to read like her sister, who was an avid reader and liked telling her family about the books she read. Along with her picture books, Sarah always borrowed one "big kids' book" from the library, and sat on her bed looking at it while her sister read to herself. Her mother said, "I think it's gonna happen, probably this summer, if I don't push her too hard."

Even though Sarah's mother tried not to push her, the importance of literacy in family activities and the model of her mother and sister were enough to push Sarah. Sarah responded to the pressure by developing strategies for displaying the appearance of competence, strategies that in themselves could have led to increasing competence, as they did for Beatrix. Sarah, however, was more conscious of her strategies as masking her own sense of incompetence and more oriented to using her literacy strategies as a social tool for managing her status with peers. Thus her focus on impression management and her sense of the gap between what she aspired to and what she believed she could achieve were always diverting her attention from the more flexible problem solving her teachers saw as the base of literacy learning. It's interesting to note that she was most open to that kind of problem solving in a dramatic play situation where she had social control of a pliant adult.

Sarah's relations with her mother and older siblings contributed to her differentiated treatment of literacy with adults and with peers in the classroom. She wanted to participate as an equal in social interactions with peers, and she was used to putting on a good show to keep up with her more competent siblings. She knew that adults could call her bluff, however, and in interactions with them she felt called upon to struggle with the difficulties of text. Her sense of incompetence seemed to make this a painful chore. Although Sarah certainly identified strongly with her mother and her sister in regard to literacy and was more oriented toward female peers in the classroom, she also interacted with male classmates as an equal more than many of the girls did. This was consistent with her relations with her older brother, who was involved in family literacy activities even though he seemed to be somewhat less invested in them than his mother and sisters. Perhaps because Sarah's mother was a single parent who modeled and included the children in both intimate and public uses of literacy, there was less sense of literacy as a gender-differentiated activity. However, Sarah's strong interest in reading competence at the end of the year may have indicated a growing identification of reading as the primary female domain.

For all the girls in this study, mothers were important role models and supporters of literacy; and their daughters, for the most part, identified with, and emulated, their mothers' literacy activities, learning about both written language and female identity through their relations with their mothers. While this process may appear to be easier for girls than for boys, girls too must deal with issues of

separation and connectedness which may be less clear-cut than they are for boys. Chodorow (1978) describes girls as having greater difficulty establishing independence, since they must simultaneously reject and embrace aspects of their mothers; mothers also tend to treat girls more than boys as extensions of themselves. When mothers' and fathers' roles within the family are strongly differentiated in relation to children's literacy, girls' orientations toward literacy may include a high degree of dependence on models, interaction, and feedback from female adults. This appeared to be the case with Beverly and Lucille, although in Lucille's case the primary female role model was a sibling surrogate mother. In a classroom situation that demanded more independence in literacy, both girls had to contend with tensions around separation and negotiated different solutions, both of which reflected aspects of female identity oriented toward nurturance. Beverly took on the role of nurturer herself, while Lucille used strategies to avoid risks and evoke nurturance when it was needed.

Issues of separation and connectedness may also be involved in girls' relations with fathers, since in psychodynamic formulations the reason for adopting an appropriate gender identity is tied to its attractiveness to the opposite-gender parent (Chodorow, 1978). When there is reason to doubt the father's valuing of female-identified literacy behavior, as may have been the case for Jane, the threat of disconnection may raise tensions about becoming literate. This is consistent with Chodorow's claim that, because a girl's father provides escape from total dependence on her mother, she "cannot risk driving him away" (1978, p. 195). On the other hand, when parental roles are less strongly differentiated because fathers are more equally involved in children's nurturance and literacy, as in Beatrix's family, issues of separation and connectedness may be negotiated without implicating literacy as a gender-identified activity. The gender dynamics of literacy may be similarly muted in single parent families, like Sarah's, when the parent takes on multiple roles that are typically gender-differentiated.

Although in general the girls did identify with and emulate their mothers' literacy, the single exception occurred when a mother treated literacy interactions with her daughter as adult-sponsored work. This kind of interaction may emphasize the separateness of mother and daughter because of their unequal roles. In Roberta's case, her mother's efforts to teach her to read and write appeared to prompt a lack of engagement in reading and writing. Roberta's resistance was more passive than Luke's, but in many ways she was less engaged in literacy than he was. She remained connected to her mother through the more pleasurable activity of being read to, but she did not invest in the adult-imposed and evaluated tasks of reading and writing herself.

except to the extent of proving she knew what she had been taught.

Interestingly, the specter of adult standards haunted even the girls whose mothers treated literacy as play, with the single exception of Beatrix. Beverly and Jane, despite high levels of competence with print, were loath to risk mistakes; and Sarah and Lucille both valued fluency and then accuracy over comprehension in the quest for reading competence. These behaviors may reflect the extent to which girls invest in literacy as a measure of female identity and status; they may also be related to Pitcher and Schultz's (1983) observation that through their close relations with mothers, girls remain more affiliated with adult culture and its rules than boys do. In any case, the girls often experienced tension between their desire for adultlike literacy performance and their teachers' assumption that they needed to risk errors to learn.

Relations with siblings also entered into girls' construction of orientations toward literacy. Younger siblings gave girls a chance to play their mothers' part by reading to them, but relations with older siblings sometimes introduced dynamics that were at odds with girls' relations with their mothers. Roberta's resistance to her mother's literacy teaching may have been reinforced by notions of school work learned from her older brother. And Sarah's desire to be like her older sister and brother fueled her need to appear competent in reading and writing at the expense of a more interactive dynamic with her mother. In Lucille's case, her older sister became a substitute for her mother, leading to an even more intensely dependent relationship around literacy.

While the girls in this study were generally more invested in literacy than the boys were, their investment was often consistent with the parameters of culturally defined female qualities and activities. Literacy was a way of being like their mothers and of 'dressing up' in adult roles. These roles involved using literacy to maintain bonds of affection and nurturance and also to entertain both themselves and others in the creation of imaginary worlds. The first use corresponds with the relational nature of women's domestic work and what are conventionally perceived as women's careers (Chodorow, 1978). The second use is similar to the reason adult women gave for reading romance fiction in Radway's (1984) study; it offered escape from the otherwise omnipresent demands of their domestic work. Mothers' reading to young children can be viewed then as straddling a thin line between work and play in women's lives, and simultaneously modeling those modes for their daughters.[10]

When literacy entered the more public arena of the classroom for these girls, it often became a measure of how fully they had already

achieved their mothers' competence. As Pitcher and Schultz (1983) point out, girls have readily available models for female identity and they have been practicing it in playing house with peers for some time. It is also important to recognize, however, that a defensive posture is not unwarranted in the public arena of school, where their teachers continue to model nurturant female roles while simultaneously valuing the male behaviors that will also ultimately win boys greater social status and power. The power that mothers wield in the home, and that girls have already learned they cannot wield in domestic play with boys (Pitcher & Schultz, 1983), is the only power culturally reserved for them. Whatever affirmation of female identity they may have experienced from loving fathers is contradicted by the 'battle of the sexes' among peers which emerges by age 5, according to Pitcher and Schultz (1983). All of the tensions that girls may experience around literacy in connection with gender relations are exacerbated by the low social status of what are culturally defined as female qualities and activities.

Thus, while girls have often been described as being less circumscribed to female qualities and activities than boys are to male qualities and activities, there is in fact considerable tension involved in this apparent freedom, since the only access to certain kinds of status and rewards is through renouncing aspects of female identity. It's not surprising that girls would experience tensions in meeting the male-oriented expectations of learners in an invisible pedagogy, or that they would organize their peer relations to support female identity. Such dynamics may have been present in the kindergarten classroom as girls consolidated their interest and competence in reading. While the girls did become engaged in writing, for most of them reading was what mattered, and it was the yardstick that they used among themselves to measure their growth toward adulthood. This may have been because reading, more than writing, was the behavior that connected them to their mothers and defined literacy as female. It may also have been because the classroom dynamics around writing highlighted peer interactions in which the boys made a visible claim on writing competence. In addition, the girls' focus on reading may have been related to characteristics of the activity itself. For even though their teachers encouraged the active construction of meaning, the reader still must follow the author's lead to enter and understand the world of the other, who is more often male, rather than taking the lead and creating her own world by writing. Thus reading may have been more consistent with the qualities associated with female identity.

BEYOND STEREOTYPES

This examination of the family data and kindergarten learning biographies of 13 children shows that there was no single pattern of consistent differences between boys and girls in literacy learning, and that no simple, categorical predictions could be made about children's literacy learning on the basis of their gender. Yet analysis of the patterns and tensions in individual children's biographies suggests that gender was centrally involved in the dynamics of their literacy learning. As the children constructed their identities in social relations around literacy within their families and in the classroom, they confronted and negotiated contradictions within systems of interrelated gender and work relations.

A primary contradiction that was a source of tension for most of the children involved the common division of labor in families and in early schooling that assigns to women responsibility for children's literacy learning. The association of literacy with females suggests a lower status for literacy activities than these middle-class families and this middle-class community proclaimed in relation to children's future work. A second contradiction arises from the role of women in the practice of invisible pedagogies in the classroom and in childrearing. Following Walkerdine's (1985) argument, mothers and teachers are required to suppress in themselves the qualities they seek to nurture in children, thus creating a contradiction between what they value in children and what they do. This is connected to a whole set of contradictions that emerges from the specification of valued qualities in learners that in other discourses are identified as male qualities. Thus, while parents and teachers proclaimed the high value of literacy for their children regardless of gender, their practices were contradictory and implicated literacy learning in the dynamics of constructing gender identity.

While Chodorow (1978) argues that the division of labor in childrearing is central to children's development of the aspects of gender identity that support patriarchy, as a social phenomenon gender identity is also constructed and reconstructed in all social relations. Thus in addition to tensions *within* particular relations, children often experienced tensions in literacy learning that resulted from contradictions *between* different social relations. As children observed and participated in literacy events with mothers, fathers, siblings, teachers, and peers, they encountered, interpreted, and responded to varied and contradictory messages about literacy, gender, and work. In each case children constructed their own literacy practices as part of

the ongoing construction of identity and relations with others, finding ways to resolve, manage, or avoid the tensions they experienced. There is thus no single story to tell about the way gender figures in literacy learning, but many stories connected by the themes and contradictions that characterize gender and work relations in the larger society.

Similarly, the stories of children's literacy learning in school do not end, but only begin, in kindergarten. Chapter 7 follows the stories of Jack, Luke, Beatrix, and Jane through their first- and second-grade years as a way of examining continuity and change in children's orientations toward literacy as they were constantly constructed and reconstructed in social relations in the classroom.

ENDNOTES

The learning biographies of 3 of the 16 children who participated in the kindergarten year of the study are not discussed in this book, due to unusual circumstances in their families. In each case there were issues of a personal nature that had an impact on the children's orientations toward literacy and their participation in classroom literacy transactions. In my judgment it is not possible to describe their situations in ways that are true to the data while also protecting the privacy and anonymity of the families.

Johnson and Greenbaum (1983) and Segel (1986) criticize the research on gender differences in children's reading interests and are doubtful to varying degrees about the validity of the findings. But they agree that adult perceptions of gender-differentiated interests lead to parenting and teaching practices that reinforce stereotypical gender roles and devalue girls' experiences and interests.

Gilbert (1989a) also documents continued gender-role stereotyping in traditional and literature-based reading materials. The materials teachers have to choose from may be better than they used to be, but they're still biased. Materials are not the whole story, however; Gilbert gives an example of a teacher using nonbiased materials in a way that reinforces traditional stereotypes.

Osmont (1987) reports the opposite pattern in two primary classrooms where girls' reading interests were better represented in the classroom library, girls appeared to get more reading time with teachers because of their interest in reading, and teachers generally identified more girls than boys as successful readers (the one male teacher was the exception to this pattern). Girls nevertheless expressed less confidence in their reading than boys did. Perhaps the important point is that even though the pattern was different, there were clear gender differences in classroom reading practices.

The issue of achievement is problematic in this regard, since on the whole girls' literacy achievement is superior to boys' despite the apparent bias favoring boys. Johnson and Greenbaum (1983) and Segel (1986) suggest that teachers emphasize boys' reading interests because of the belief that boys need greater motivation to read and are at greater risk of failure; girls' achievement may be taken for granted as a cultural expectation. Clarricoates (1978) argues that girls' ability and achievement are attributed to conformity whereas boys are seen as more intelligent and interesting, if also more challenging. Thus even achievement has gender-differentiated meanings; girls may do well on conventional measures of literacy, but this accomplishment is not as highly regarded as boys' demonstrations of other kinds of competence. White (1986)

points out that girls' interest and achievement in literacy is a cul-de-sac that doesn't lead to later academic and socioeconomic success.

[6] This dynamic may explain the evidence that girls are much more likely to read boys' books than vice versa (e.g., Norvell, 1973). Boys can only lose status by reading girls' books, whereas girls may gain status, at least vicariously, by reading boys' books.

[7] Gilbert (1989b) notes that, in invisible pedagogies, language and literacy are also described as ideologically innocent and neutral, as natural processes rather than social practices. This has the effect of obscuring gender dynamics in classroom literacy and puts teachers in the position of supporting children's choices of highly gendered literacy practices.

[8] Chodorow (1978) and others have noted that there are stronger sanctions against boys adopting what are regarded as female behaviors than vice versa.

[9] Radway (1984) reports that husbands took a more positive view of their wives' romance reading if they began to write them for publication.

[10] D. E. Smith (1987) argues that conventional definitions of work and play are unsuited to describing women's activities because they are based on the nature of men's involvement in capitalist production, not on the domestic roles women traditionally play in support of production.

chapter 7
Continuity and Change in First and Second Grade

In this chapter we return to the biographies of Luke, Jack, Beatrix, and Jane to follow their literacy learning in first and second grade. The focus is on continuity and change in the children's orientations toward literacy as they negotiated social relations in classroom contexts altered by changes in the gender and instructional program of their teacher and by the increased importance of peer culture. As in previous chapters, the themes of gender and work link individual learning and classroom social dynamics with the larger world of social relations outside the classroom and the school, offering a window on how the future was being constructed by and for these children and how that future was connected to the past. Such glimpses of individual children in historical perspective are rare in the literature on literacy learning despite widespread belief in the importance of literacy in shaping one's life. We turn briefly to consider what the research from different theoretical perspectives tells us about continuity and change in children's literacy learning as background for the approach taken in this chapter.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN LITERACY LEARNING

There are relatively few case studies of children's literacy learning during the early school years which extend over more than a single year. Thus little attention has been given to long-term continuity and change in the literacy of individual children. Most long-term case studies have been based on the developmental assumptions of the emergent literacy perspective and focus on patterns of change over time in children's literacy knowledge and processes. Bissex (1980), for example, describes the changes in her son's cognitive knowledge and processes as consistent with the Piagetian notion that growth is

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characterized by qualitiative changes in the organization of knowledge; on the other hand, she also notes the continuity in such personal characteristics as his interests and style of response.

Other long-term studies within the emergent literacy perspective describe patterns of continuity and change that distinguish between universal cognitive principles and individual differences in experience or cognitive style. Wells (1986), for example, attributes patterns of continuity and change in children's assessed abilities with oral and written language to differences in the amount of their experience with oral and written language. On the other hand, Bussis et al. (1985) link different patterns of change over time in children's reading to cognitive styles which show considerable continuity; they argue that the differences are in how children orchestrate knowledge in the act of reading more than in knowledge itself, which is apparently constructed on the basis of more universal principles. Thus, in general, case studies from the emergent literacy perspective treat change over time as a matter of the increasing elaboration and restructuring of cognitive knowledge following universal principles (with differences in rate depending on experience) and continuity over time as a matter of individual differences in the use of knowledge depending on personality and cognitive style.

Long-term case studies which focus on individual children's learning from the social construction of literacy perspective emphasize social aspects of continuity and change. In a study examining patterns of continuity and change over time in family literacy practices and children's attention to print, Taylor (1983) describes changes in children's literacy activities as related to shifts in their focus on the different social practices in which print functions. Although the entry into conventional school literacy practices may provoke increased attention to the form of written language, within the family there is continuity in children's emphasis on the social meanings of print. Heath's (1983) study of literacy as social practice shows the importance of continuity between community and school practices. Although she reports cases where children's literacy practices gradually incorporated aspects of the school practices that differed from their community's practices, she also attributes patterns of school failure to gaps between community and school literacy practices when continuity is not constructed between them.

Studies focusing primarily on the social construction of literacy within schools also examine continuity and change in children's learning as related to the school's social practices. In a study of reading groups differentiated by ability level, Borko and Eisenhart (1989) followed the progress of one child who was transferred from a low

group to a middle group; they argue that she was able to make the change successfully because, in addition to her performance on achievement tests, her social practices were already more like the practices of the middle group than of the low group. Other students, whose test performance was comparable, were not even considered for transfer because of their social practices. The power of school practices to evoke and sustain academic failure is shown in a long-term case study by Taylor (1990), in which a child continues to fail at school literacy tasks despite his increasing success in the context of another set of practices outside of school. Altogether, case studies from the social construction of literacy perspective treat changes over time in children's literacy as a matter of the gradual adoption of the literacy practices of one's primary social group and gradual adaptation to the practices of new social groups. This suggests that change is grounded in continuity and may be precluded by large gaps between the practices of different groups.

Long-term case studies of individual learning have not often been framed by the perspective of literacy as social status and identity, but there are two studies which raise questions about the connections between individual academic failure and relations of status and dominance in the larger society. In the first, Hood et al. (1980) describe the dynamics of school literacy practices that have the effect of sustaining the academic failure of a 'learning disabled' child and report the positive changes that resulted from practices that did not call attention to individual competence or incompetence. They raise the question of why so many school activities focus on displays of competence, a question which McDermott (1987) later answers by discussing the role of academic success and failure in supporting social hierarchies.

The second study, by Trueba (1988), describes patterns of decreasing participation and reduced capability in classroom literacy activities over time as students from low-status and immigrant groups internalize their teachers' negative perceptions of their intellectual abilities. These patterns are attributed to classroom literacy practices and to the politics of English-only policies and racial prejudice. Both studies suggest that school literacy practices are generally organized to support continuity in a child's status in the academic hierarchy, and that both the direction and extent of change in students' literacy competence are largely controlled by these practices. One of the mechanisms supporting continuity in status is the construction of the child's identity as intellectually incapable within the social relations of the classroom.

Both of these studies focus largely on achievement in literacy rather than on the particular dynamics of literacy learning and their connection to social relations inside and outside the classroom. This chapter pursues an analysis of the dynamics of literacy learning as connected to social relations in examining the first and second grade learning biographies of Luke, Jack, Beatrix, and Jane. Patterns of continuity and change in the children's orientations toward literacy are considered in relation to changes in classroom pedagogy and social relations involving gender and work. The analysis suggests that relations with a male teacher and the increased importance of peer relations introduced both new sources of tension and new ways of resolving or managing old tensions. While the resulting changes in some children's orientations toward literacy were not insignificant, there were strong underlying patterns of continuity which had their roots in family relations involving gender and work. The chapter closes with a vision of children's literacy learning as grounded in self-definition in the social world.

CHANGES IN THE CLASSROOM CONTEXT FOR LITERACY: PEDAGOGY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

It is important to describe several changes in the context for classroom literacy learning as a basis for considering the children's evolving orientations toward literacy. The first set of changes involves pedagogical practice; the second set has to do with social relations in the classroom. Although literacy instruction in Jim Sullivan's first grade and Susan Benedict's second grade continued to be based on the assumptions and beliefs described in Chapter 3, the specific pedagogical practices changed to match the children's increasing proficiency as readers and writers, to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, and to accommodate to the structures and practices required by the school. The most important dimensions of change in relation to children's orientations toward literacy involved the relative degree of teacher vs. child initiative and regulation in various literacy activities and the degree to which peer interaction and collaboration were allowed or required in those activities. For it was in children's relations with adults and other children around literacy that they continued to construct and enact their orientations toward literacy.

The writing workshop time was a central feature of the literacy program in both first and second grade. The children wrote and shared their writing for about an hour every day, with rare exceptions.

Generally children were free to choose their topics and genres and to work collaboratively with peers if they chose. Both Mr. Sullivan and Mrs. Benedict asked all the children to write "true pieces" at some time during the year because they believed that it was easier for children to evaluate and revise the content of personal narratives. Other kinds of teacher-assigned writing, described below, could be worked on during the writing workshop time and sometimes displaced the children's free choice of topic and genre. The workshop often began with a brief 'mini-lesson' in which the teacher modeled or discussed some aspect of writing, such as choosing a good lead or punctuating dialogue. Children were asked to think about this lesson in their writing that day, but there was no specific assignment related to the mini-lesson. Almost every writing workshop ended with an authors' circle in which children had the option of sharing and hearing response to their writing. In second grade Mrs. Benedict instituted smaller conference groups which took the place of authors' circle 2 days a week. In these groups children were required to share regularly.

In addition to the writing workshop, the teachers gave instruction in specific genres of writing. In February of first grade Mr. Sullivan began a poetry workshop in which he read poetry to the children, encouraged them to read poetry, and asked them to write poetry in a poetry journal. In March he asked the children to write self-portraits focusing on what they were experts at, and in April they interviewed someone in their families and wrote about his or her expertise. In the second grade Mrs. Benedict focused on writing across the curriculum.[1] At the beginning of the year, the children began their year-long study of 'community' by writing reports based on their interviews of people who worked in their school. These projects were planned and completed in groups. In December the children each chose an animal to study and wrote reports using written sources. They also observed terrarium animals in the classroom and wrote reports based on their observations. In February and March they continued their study of community by writing reports based on their interviews of people who worked in their town. The interviews and reports were collaborative group projects. In April and May they extended the notion of community to the world by working in groups on two reports, the first about African ways of life and the second about various aspects of Chinese culture. These reports were based primarily on written sources. The children chose their own topics for the local community reports and thus indirectly their own peer groups; for the Africa and China reports, topics and groups were assigned by the teacher.

The two central reading events in the literacy program were the teachers' reading of literature to the children and the children's free choice reading time. In first grade Mr. Sullivan organized his reading

to focus on either an author or a genre for periods of a week or more. He began the year with authors Ezra Jack Keats, Beatrix Potter, Russell and Lillian Hoban, and A. A. Milne, followed by fairy tales, Leo Lionni, African folk tales, and poetry, ending the year with two novels, *Charlotte's Web* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. His reading was usually followed by related drama or art activities which he asked the children to do, such as making a Winnie-the-Pooh bulletin board with dialogue bubbles for the characters. Dramatization of the stories through plays or puppet shows was a frequent and popular activity. Mrs. Benedict also read to the children every day in second grade, beginning the year by reading several Judy Blume books, followed by several Jane Yolen books, myths, poetry, African tales, and Chinese stories. She tended to use the books as a source of mini-lessons for writing and/or reading, such as asking the children to look for examples of authors' "showing not telling" in their own reading and writing. In both classrooms the children's own reading time was called "friend-to-friend reading" to encourage them to read with a partner. The teachers regularly conferred with students about their reading during this time. Mr. Sullivan instituted and Mrs. Benedict continued a practice called "friend-to-friend conferences," in which children were asked to describe and discuss their reading in a structured way. The choice of reading material was always the child's, and there was a well-stocked classroom library in addition to the books children selected from the school library or brought in from home.

In addition to these reading activities from children's literature, both teachers accommodated to the school district's reading curriculum in some way because of pressure on them to fit into the organization of reading instruction in the school. Late in October Mr. Sullivan introduced individual reading folders, which included stories and workbook pages from the basal reading series. Children worked on these materials independently 2 days a week and then had a conference with their teacher about their work. Mrs. Benedict acceded to the directive from the school's reading consultant that there be ability-based reading groups. These groups, which met twice a week, were assigned stories from the designated level of the basal reading series and asked to complete projects based on their reading and to read children's literature related to the topic or genre being studied. Both teachers selected from the basal reading series those texts and activities they judged most compatible with their own pedagogical goals. The school's reading consultant came into both classrooms to work with designated individuals or groups, not necessarily the lowest ability students. A few children who were identified as having special needs received reading instruction from special education teachers.

Thus in both classes there was a wide range of reading and writing

activities. In all cases the primary emphasis was on communication and comprehension rather than on isolated skills or language rules, but the textual constraints and social contexts varied. In some activities, such as the writing workshop and friend-to-friend reading, students selected and regulated the nature of the text and the level and type of social interaction. In other activities, such as reading folders groups and report writing, the teacher exerted considerable control over both the text and the social interaction. This meant that, compared to the kindergarten classroom, there were relatively more literacy activities that involved some aspects of adult-regulated work.[3]

There were two significant changes in classroom social relations that marked the beginning of first grade. The first was that the children had a male teacher, changing the gender dynamics of their relations with their teacher in literacy events.[4] The second change in social relations might best be described as the development of a more complex peer culture in the classroom.[5] It was readily observable from the beginning of first grade that the children were much more concerned about defining their status within social groups of peers on the basis of criteria that were established and negotiated among peers. Certain topics and forms of conversation appeared to play an important role in defining social boundaries, for example, birthday parties, secrets, and scatological language. The children also paid more overt attention to gender as a social boundary and would have organized themselves into highly segregated gender groups if given free rein. During snack time one day in October, the children conducted a poll asking those who were girls to raise their hands and then those who were boys. When Mr. Sullivan asked them if they were learning any new information from this poll, his query seemed beside the point. He tried to counter the gender segregation by asking the children themselves to "balance" the gender distribution in choosing partners or places to sit, and he sometimes assigned children to pairs or groups for activities so that he could control the gender mix. Attention to these peer-defined social issues varied among the children, but their responses to the developing peer culture were an important part of their social relations with peers around literacy. With its more overt focus on gender boundaries, the peer culture also changed the gender dynamics of literacy learning.

In examining the first and second grade learning biographies of Luke, Jack, Beatrix, and Jane, certain points of interest immediately arise from the description of the specific contexts of the first and second grade classrooms: first is the children's relations with a male teacher vs. a female teacher, second is the children's responses to activities which were student regulated vs. teacher regulated, and third is the way children treated relations with peers in literacy

activities. All of these points connect continuity and change in the dynamics of literacy learning with relations of gender and work.

LUKE

First Grade

Early in first grade Luke's response to having a male teacher who modeled and supported literacy was strikingly different from his earlier responses to female teachers at home and at school. He did not stop being playful and mischievous, but his investment in classroom literacy activities was clearly greater and appeared to be centered on interaction with Mr. Sullivan. He listened intently as his teacher read to the class, and he brought in his own Winnie-the-Pooh book to show Mr. Sullivan and have him read. Luke's writing was also more responsive to his teacher's models and expectations. Although he continued to write mostly cartoon and movie inspired space adventures, he was very interested in publishing and quickly completed several short pieces. When Mr. Sullivan suggested that the children might want to write a Pooh story themselves, he wrote a piece of realistic fiction in which Pooh went camping (camping had been the subject of Mr. Sullivan's own first story written in front of the class). Although this story did not borrow much besides the main character from A. A. Milne, the language conveyed the story more fully than it did in Luke's space adventures. His text, in this sense, was more literary.

Nevertheless, in a writing interview with graduate student researcher Lenore Carlisle, Luke was largely uncooperative and said he did not like writing. In this context he continued to identify writing with female models, naming one of his older sisters as a good writer. When Lenore asked what made his sister a good writer, Luke responded, "I don't know. She was just born. When she was a baby, she knew how to read already, and write."

By midyear Luke was heavily influenced by peers in his choice of writing topics. He was much more interactive with peers while writing than he had been in the past, and the interaction reduced his writing output. Although Luke wrote about the same topics as male peers, such as a bloody story called "The Haunted Mansion," which appeared in several "parts" written by various boys, he rarely wrote jointly authored pieces as others did. His teacher's influence was felt in different ways. Following Mr. Sullivan's insistence that Luke sit next to him at the authors' circle, he began to respond to other students' writing and to share his own. He did not use their responses as a basis for altering his texts though. He revised only in conferences with Mr. Sullivan, where, for instance, he added information and an ending to his story about E. T. before it was published.

Luke also became much more interactive with peers during friend-to-

friend reading time. Before, largely disregarding peers, he had concentrated on practicing texts he knew he could read and looking at the pictures in space or science books. Now, apparently with peers in mind, he chose texts that were humorous and had predictable language, though he spent more time fooling around with peers than he did reading.

When Mr. Sullivan requested in March that the class write "true pieces" and began to work with them on their self-portraits, Luke responded with a more substantial investment in writing. He wrote a personal narrative about going to play at his friend's house, which he revised for publication in conference with his teacher. He also considerably elaborated his portrait of himself as an expert at finding things (like baby bunnies and a snake) by working with Mr. Sullivan at the computer. Even in the hand-written part of this piece, the role of drawing was greatly reduced, and his language became more expansive as he dictated for Mr. Sullivan to type.

The importance of the fact that his teacher was male was underscored by his response to the poetry journal. Although Luke enjoyed listening to the humorous poems his teacher read and became quite engaged in reading them himself, he showed little interest in the poetry journal, an activity which was often supervised by the female teaching intern. The only times Luke wrote anything that involved play with language were in conference with Mr. Sullivan.

For the rest of the year Luke operated with sharply distinguished categories of reading and writing in different social relations. When he was free to choose his writing topics and genres, he worked with peers and borrowed their topics or wrote space and monster adventures on his own; these pieces showed none of the expansive language of his personal narratives. In a writing interview he said that he shared his pieces at the authors' circle to find out if others liked them; if they did, then he published them. When he wrote under his teacher's direction, he constructed more elaborate texts, for example his description of his family's expertise in which his father's work as a scientist was amply detailed while his mother's similar work was accorded one sentence. Only with his teacher's prompting did he add to or revise any of his texts.

Similarly in reading, when he read with or for peers he chose humorous texts and focused on performance and social interaction. When he read with his teacher, he chose predictable texts or persisted in reading his teacher's choices with considerable success. When he read by himself, he chose science books and began to attempt to read them rather than look at the pictures. He described himself as "sort of" a good reader to Lenore Carlisle in a reading interview at the end of the year because "I don't know all the words in the universe." He identified several male peers as good readers because "they know all these words." When she asked if he liked reading with friends, he said it was fun "'cause then you talk and you get to

fool around. . . . If I really read, then I don't read with anybody." He said he liked all kinds of books, and he identified George Lucas as his favorite author.

Second Grade

Luke's pattern of categorizing reading and writing by social relations continued into second grade. The major observable change was in his response to having a female teacher again. He did not resist Mrs. Benedict in conferences as he had in kindergarten, but he also did not seek her attention or support as he had Mr. Sullivan's. The result was that he devoted more of his attention and energy to peer interaction and to his own interests. One day during the first week of school, Luke sat in his teacher's chair and announced, "I'm the teacher, and we can play the whole time today."

Most of Luke's writing fit his category of play. He wrote often with George, whose space adventure topics matched Luke's own interests. Drawings and accompanying dialogue characterized these pieces. But he also began to write stories where characters like turtles and energizer batteries did the things that Luke liked to do, such as go to the swimming pool and the amusement park. Compared to his space adventures, these stories usually had only one drawing and more language, but strikingly undramatic action. He told Mrs. Benedict that he liked writing better than reading, "because it's more fun. I like to see what I can write. If I write a good piece, I feel good." He did not participate in the authors' circle, however, and after publishing one of his early turtle stories showed little interest in publication.

Luke's reading continued to show the patterns established at the end of first grade. If he read with peers, he mostly distracted them from reading. But on his own or with a teacher he was able to comprehend texts that he could not read easily. On formal and informal reading assessments, he tested about a half year above grade level and was placed in the third from the highest of four reading groups. But Luke liked to read for gist and attend to the details that interested him; he resisted any activity that structured his reading or his response to it, such as peer conferences or the reading group.

At midyear Luke had difficulty sustaining writing efforts. As George's stories began to mimic the Judy Blume books he loved, Luke tried to borrow ideas but didn't pursue them far. He complained to Mrs. Benedict that he and George would agree to share topics and then George would take off on his own and forget about Luke. Even stories about his own topics faltered for lack of ideas. At Mrs. Benedict's prompting he brought an unfinished turtle piece to the authors' circle, used an idea he got there that didn't have much to do with what he had already written, then

abandoned the piece. He rarely shared at the authors' circle and only shared in his conference group because he had to, but he did contribute to his group by making suggestions and managing turn taking.

Then two things happened that gave new direction to Luke's writing. The first was his discovery, along with all the other boys, of 'choose-your-own-adventure' books, a genre in which the reader participates by making choices that determine what happens next in the story (readers are instructed to turn to different pages depending on the choice they make). Like his earlier link to George's space adventures, this was a case where the interests of peers connected to Luke's own interest in fast-paced adventures. Like the other boys, he began trying to master the construction of choose-your-own-adventure stories in writing. The second event that sparked new interest in writing was the assigned animal reports. Even though this was a teacher-sponsored activity, it also connected to Luke's own interest in animals and he pursued his report on ants with considerable energy. This energy carried over into the community reports as well.

Luke's reading at this time revolved around choose-your-own-adventure books, which he read both on his own and with peers. Still in an interview with Lenore Carlisle, he described a wide range of reading choices, including mystery and adventure, humor, and poetry, and he indicated that he would like to read more books about real things if he could find interesting ones. By the end of the year, he had apparently found what he was looking for. His reading included factual books about animals and space as well as Encyclopedia Brown detective books. When he was asked if reading was important, though, he focused on its work-oriented consequences: he replied, "Yeah. (Why?) Cause if you go into college, and they tell you to read a story, and you don't know how, you'll flunk."

For most of the rest of the year, Luke was more engaged in report writing than in writing of his own choice. He carried his group in the report on nomads in Africa and enjoyed his research on Chinese art. During writing workshop he drew cartoons and wrote several chapters of a book about G. I. Joe, but the format of chapters seemed to be his focus, since the content of the chapters was only a sentence or two. He also wrote one unusually long piece of realistic fiction about a boy and a lost kitten which he apparently never shared with his teacher. In an interview with Mrs. Benedict he told her that true pieces were good "because they tell all about you, but there aren't that much things that I do." Nevertheless she encouraged him to write personal narrative, and at the end of the year he seemed to feel that he had some things worth writing about. He wrote and published his second book of the year about his woodworking class, and he followed this with a true story about going to an armor museum with Mr. Sullivan, Mrs. Benedict, and a group of peers.

When I visited Luke at home at the end of the summer to return his

writing, the continuing role of his older sisters in relation to literacy was apparent. They were both there and talked to me more than Luke did; they reported that Luke never told them anything he was doing in school. At my request Luke got out all his published books and agreed, with some coaxing, to choose what he thought were his best. In addition to his published woodworking piece, he searched out his unpublished "The Boy and the Kitten" and one of his choose-your-own-adventure pieces. He also selected four of his first-grade published books. His sisters reported that he had brought home some unused writing booklets from school, and Luke told me that he was writing choose-your-own-adventure stories in them. His oldest sister reported that she was reading Luke a series of books that were fictional but included true facts about animals and that their mother was reading *The Phantom Toll Booth* to them. In thanks for his participation in the study, I gave Luke a science book about life on earth. Although he was eager to go to a friend's house to play, he sat and studied the pictures, read the captions, and asked questions about things he didn't understand. Once his sisters stopped talking, he told me about his neighbor finding a strange bone while excavating for a garage.

It was obvious that, over the 3 years of the study, Luke had established a way of approaching literacy that suited his own purposes and interests. Over time he seemed to separate literacy from issues of adult authority and control so that by second grade his response to activities that involved higher levels of teacher regulation depended on his intrinsic interest in the activity itself. He still preferred to set his own agenda; but when teacher choices matched his own interests, he did not resist just to resist. It is difficult to judge how strongly this change was related to the fact that Luke had a male teacher in first grade, but he clearly responded to Mr. Sullivan with a new kind of engagement in literacy events. Rather than avoiding contact with his teacher, Luke often sought it out; and he was interested in entering the dialogue on Mr. Sullivan's terms rather than insisting on his own. Literacy appeared to be defined as less alien gender territory with Mr. Sullivan holding the high ground.

Starting in first grade Luke also became more engaged in interaction with male peers around reading and writing, perhaps partly because he now perceived literacy as an appropriate activity for males. Although he often chose socially interactive modes of reading and writing, he acknowledged himself that not much reading or writing took place in his interactions with peers unless the activity was teacher regulated. If Luke was going to "really" read or write, he needed to be alone or with his teacher. He rarely established a joint focus on a task with peers, especially if he had ideas of his own about the activity; he would manage (or undermine) the structure of the

interaction and he would support (or sabotage) the reading and writing of peers, but having others involved in his own reading or writing was harder to handle. Luke had renegotiated the boundary between work and play in literacy to include more collaborative, text-focused interactions with adults, but he was less able to achieve this with peers, perhaps because the need to display social competence with peers was more easily met in less text-focused ways that seemed more playful to him.

Thus for Luke, the changes in classroom social relations in first and second grade allowed him to resolve some of the tensions he had experienced around gender and work in his relations with female adults. He no longer saw literacy itself as a female domain and accepted their support of his own interests in literacy, but his interaction with female teachers depended on their initiatives. In relations with male peers, on the other hand, Luke was as eager to find common ground as he was with Mr. Sullivan. This left him with new tensions between peer-defined agendas and his own interests, which he managed largely by focusing on others' agendas in social interaction and pursuing his personal interests on his own.

JACK

First Grade

Jack's response to having a male teacher in first grade was not as pronounced as Luke's was. Jack was eager to please Mr. Sullivan, just as he had been eager to please Mrs. Benedict. If anything, Jack was even more sensitive to Mr. Sullivan's expectations, and it was even more important to him that he measure up. In some cases this contributed to Jack's full-blown engagement in literacy-related activities. For instance, he was an enthusiastic participant in dramatizations of the stories Mr. Sullivan read to the class, and he was not shy about taking female parts or singing roles. He also incorporated into his writing some of the topics of discussion related to the stories read. His first published book, for example, departed from his usual themes of destruction and rescue to focus on the theme of friendship drawn from Ezra Jack Keats's books; and it included his first use of dialogue, which had been discussed a great deal in preparing the story dramatizations.

In other instances, however, Jack was more concerned with appearance than with substance. He was a regular contributor at the authors' circle, but he offered stock responses to other children's writing such as "I like your illustrations" or "Are you going to add?" And in reading aloud, accuracy and fluency were more important to Jack than comprehension. He was embarrassed by mistakes, and to avoid them he chose to read familiar books even though he demonstrated successful strategies for figuring out

unfamiliar text when he read with his teacher. He didn't seem to feel successful, though, until he could "remember" all the words, as he put it.

Being in control of the text meant being able to control the reading interaction with peers, so Jack always chose well-known texts to read with peers and he was more relaxed reading with them than with Mr. Sullivan. Peer interaction was also important to Jack during writing, as it had been in kindergarten, but in the beginning of the year Jack's writing topics and genres were greatly influenced by Mr. Sullivan. In December, when graduate student researcher Lenore Carlisle asked him how he had learned to write, he answered, "By Mr. Sullivan." In January, however, Jack's focus on peer interaction took over to the point where it was often in conflict with his desire to please his teacher and he found himself embarrassed when he was caught 'goofing off.' He borrowed topics from peers, included peers as characters in his stories, and began to co-author pieces with peers. Within a single piece of writing he often moved back and forth between the violent confrontations that many of the boys wrote about and the realistic fiction he had previously been writing. For example, one of his published stories, *The Mother Sun Has a Baby*, began with a space war against the sun family and then continued with several domestic episodes based on the birth of a new baby. Jack was clearly better able to sustain and develop topics that were close to home, but he continued to attempt the topics that were popular with male peers.

Perhaps as a result of writing with peers by writing sequels to their stories or actually co-authoring stories with them, Jack became more engaged in substance at the authors' circle. He made specific suggestions for adding to other children's stories, and he responded substantively to their questions and suggestions for his stories. These interactions were more oriented toward approval for Jack than toward working on his text, however, as he never added to or revised his pieces afterward and he commented that he was bothered when other children didn't like his writing. At the same time, he also became more collaborative in his reading with peers, allowing others to assist him with texts that were less familiar to him.

When Jack began writing personal narrative in March at Mr. Sullivan's request, his stories became more focused and cohesive and his language sounded like his speaking voice. He published two personal narratives in addition to his self-portrait about his expertise at being a baby and his piece about his parents' expertise at their home business. (It's interesting to note, in comparison to Luke's portrait of his family, that Jack described his parents as working "as a team" and gave almost as much attention to his mother as to his father.) In a writing interview with Mr. Sullivan, Jack talked about liking to get comments and questions at the authors' circle and said that friends could help him remember what happened for true stories and that he would put in good suggestions for "fake" stories. This

appeared to be an instance of Jack's reporting what was expected rather than what he did, however, because the only time he revised his pieces was with Mr. Sullivan's direct assistance. It's also possible that Jack actually did use suggestions he received from peers while he was drafting, but his focus at the authors' circle continued to be on giving a well-received performance.

Even though Jack's personal narratives were well received at the authors' circle, he continued to co-author adventure stories with other boys; and for the rest of the year he wrote stories that even his peers had difficulty following. He wrote one more personal narrative after Mr. Sullivan told him that the reason his stories were confusing was because he didn't know enough about his topics. His "About the Author" pages in his published books reflected the different values represented by these two varieties of writing. His co-authored adventure stories described the authors as playing kickball, fighting, and climbing mountains, while his personal narratives described Jack as a good painter, writer, and reader.

Jack discovered a new reading interest with Mr. Sullivan's introduction of poetry. Although the Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky poems he enjoyed were more challenging reading than he had been doing, he approached them the same way, listening to them and practicing them until he had mastered them. He was very comfortable with this opportunity for dramatic performance in reading poetry. He still described sounding out words as his only reading strategy and said he was a good reader but would be better when he grew up.

In an end-of-year interview, Jack's mother expressed her pleasure with his reading competence: "His growth has been incredible," she said. He was not writing much at home anymore, but reading was still an activity he shared with his brothers. They read together each night before bed and got new books each week at the library. Their literacy activities were less under her direction than before, but her sponsorship was still apparent. She said she would ask them to write during summer trips and would enforce a quiet reading time after lunch. Jack, she said, still liked being read to as well as reading himself. It was apparent that, although reading and writing were valued, most of the boys' time was spent in more active play. Of Jack's diverse interests, his mother said, "There's a lot going on with him all the time... He's on top of things, very involved, very in tune." She described Jack as loving to go to school and having a special relationship with Mr. Sullivan.

Second Grade

At the beginning of second grade, Jack returned to his earlier pattern of attending primarily to teacher expectations and norms. Although it was not directly requested, he wrote personal narratives describing experiences

with his family and friends. In response to conferences with Mrs. Benedict, he began to leave out less important details so that, in his words, he would not "bore people in the authors' circle." But even though he said he used the suggestions he got at the authors' circle, he still did not revise pieces after he shared them.

Jack responded with enthusiasm to two teacher-sponsored activities. The first was the interviews and reports about people who worked in the school. He chose to interview the principal and took the lead among his group in asking questions. The second was Mrs. Benedict's introduction of individualized spelling lists and tests, using words drawn from each child's writing during the week. Jack studied his words diligently and always spelled them perfectly on the test. The first activity seemed to appeal to Jack's flair for the dramatic in social events, and the second to his penchant for memorization and his preference for clearly defined tasks.

In keeping with these latter characteristics, Jack's scores on standardized reading tests showed him reading on a higher level (one-half year above grade level) than did the informal reading inventory (right on grade level). In the context of assessment, Jack's reading was quite accurate and his miscues did not alter meaning drastically, but his answers to comprehension questions did not show full understanding of what he had read. As a result of assessment, Jack was placed in the lowest of four reading groups. During friend-to-friend reading he selected familiar texts that were easy for him to read, but he was so taken with Mrs. Benedict's reading of Judy Blume books that he soon tried reading them himself. He also attempted other 'chapter books' that many of his peers were reading, but he experienced great difficulty with them. He explained to Lenore Carlisle in the reading interview that he liked to read chapter books because "that's how I can get more reading like long letters and words," and he described himself as a good reader because "I don't skip any words."

Peer influence soon took over in his choice of writing topics and genres as well. He moved into writing adventure fiction, which he often co-authored with a partner. On his own he continued to write occasional personal narratives. It was the personal narratives that he identified as his best writing in an interview with Mrs. Benedict, because he liked the experiences about which he had written.

Then, like Luke's, Jack's writing was stimulated by two midyear events. The first was the assigned animal reports, which gave Jack the teacher-regulated structure he liked. He worked quickly toward completion, but for the first time he expanded what he had written on the basis of a conference with Mrs. Benedict and questions and suggestions from the authors' circle. Perhaps it was the first time that the need for more information seemed real to Jack. The second event that influenced his writing was the boys' discovery of choose-your-own-adventure books. Although Jack read very few of these books, he joined the other boys in

writing them. They seemed to combine the appeal of adventure stories with the orderly structure Jack preferred. He quickly mastered the basic pattern and did not complicate it by extending paths beyond a single choice. One of his stories was aptly titled "Choose or Die," because one choice always led to immediate termination and the other to a new choice-point with little intervening plot development.

Mrs. Benedict tried to help Jack find interesting chapter books that he could handle; two of her more successful efforts were Thornton Burgess books and some science nonfiction. Even when Jack could recognize the words accurately and follow the action broadly, he often missed important cues to the overall interpretation of the text, especially if the content was somewhat removed from his real life experience. This happened one day when he read a long story with Lenore Carlisle that she had selected. He sounded out all the unfamiliar words and reported the events of the story but missed the emotional tenor and a turn at the end that reframed the perspective. He finished with the comment, "I read this whole book." Getting through the text often seemed to be the object of Jack's reading.

In a later interview with Lenore, his responses reflected both teacher and peer influence on his reading. His reported favorite authors were all among those Mr. Sullivan and Mrs. Benedict had read to the children, but he described the poetry and humor he read with peers as his most frequent reading choices. When asked if it was important to know how to read, he gave practical everyday reasons for reading such as finding an exit on the highway or following instructions. And when reading a passage that allowed him to draw on his everyday knowledge to figure out an unfamiliar word, he was successful even though his first reaction was that he couldn't read it because he couldn't sound it out.

An important shift took place in Jack's writing in February. He was writing a piece that was supposed to be funny, but the crucial event was not described clearly in the text. When Mrs. Benedict didn't get the joke, he still thought he had said everything he needed to; but when she invited two of his peers to listen and they didn't get it, Jack was convinced he needed to add more information. Mrs. Benedict helped him define the problem, but he went off on his own to solve it and did so successfully. From that point forward, Jack treated his written text as the focus of his interactions with peers in the authors' circle and conference group, and he used their questions and suggestions as a basis for revising what he had written.

For the rest of the year Jack wrote personal narratives when he had special family events to report, and did not sustain much writing otherwise. He was quite engaged in the community reports, even when his group's visit to the police station yielded little information. He wrote most of the group's report on the basis of historical documents. But when the study of community moved away from the realm of Jack's personal experience, he

treated the reports as a series of isolated mechanical tasks to be completed as quickly as possible.

There was always a variety of chapter books in Jack's cubby, but it was hard to tell which, if any of them, he actually read. He reported liking a book he had read in which the vocabulary was based on the Dolch list, and he expressed a wish to have a phonics workbook to do. He was happiest with the specific assignments of the reading group. As long as Jack had material he could control in reading and writing, he worked cheerfully and constructively with peers; but when he was at a loss for a writing topic or an engaging book or was working to finish a task, he shifted the focus of peer interaction to status-defining activities and topics. This was especially true when the teacher intern, rather than Mrs. Benedict, was in charge of the class.

When I visited Jack at the end of the summer to return his second grade writing, I also asked him to get out whatever writing and published books he had saved from kindergarten through second grade. He and his mother, and at various times his two brothers, enjoyed reviewing his writing together. Jack commented on his "messy" drawings at the beginning of kindergarten and seemed embarrassed by his early spelling, but he expressed pride in his first published book, *The Seventy Truck*, and in his later drawings. He remembered a great deal about even his earliest writing. When I asked him how his writing was different now, he replied, "I write now better. I probably watch more television now and junk [apparently in reference to his drawing]. . . . I been watchin' all the other kids write so it's neater." Among his nine choices for the best of his writing were seven personal narratives about shared family experiences, to which his mother added his self-portrait because "it reminds me of all your baby times." The important family bonds reflected in Jack's stories also characterized his mother's appreciation and support of his writing.

Jack's mother also told him, "You're a good reader," as he read his published books to her. But when I asked Jack what good books he had read over the summer, he had trouble remembering any. He did show me the Shel Silverstein book he had received as a gift from a cousin, and read me one of his favorite poems from it. While reading was clearly also warmly supported by the family, Jack seemed to continue to attend primarily to the social aspects of the activity itself rather than to his experience of the text. When I gave him a biography of the Wright brothers in thanks for his participation in the study, he asked, "How many chapters does it have?"

What didn't change over the 3 years of the study was Jack's primary orientation toward the social currency of literacy. Whether his goal was to complete a task to adult expectations or to recruit the attention and friendship of peers, he treated reading and writing as means to

that end. He was most engaged and successful in literacy activities when the perceived 'demands' of teachers or peers coincided with his own preferences for physical action, concrete personal experience, memorization, and order. When there was not such a fortunate coincidence of agendas, Jack often worked toward rote completion of the task or shifted the focus of peer interaction toward other kinds of play. Without immediate social incentives for literacy, Jack did not choose to read or write. He seemed not to have internalized any rewards for interacting with texts rather than with people.

Perhaps because Jack identified with his brothers in meeting his mother's expectations for reading and writing, his response to a male teacher in first grade was not as striking as Luke's. Although it seemed even more important for him to measure up to Mr. Sullivan's standards, Jack's sense of male camaraderie with his teacher may have somewhat blurred the boundaries between adult-sponsored work and peer-sponsored play for him. He was more prone to 'goof off' and expect to get away with it in Mr. Sullivan's room than in Mrs. Benedict's. Consistent with his focus on the social interaction involved in literacy, Jack's identification with Mr. Sullivan was most apparent in his participation in social performances like dramatizing stories. Jack seemed to incorporate Mr. Sullivan's model of literacy into activities he thought of as play, thereby expanding the range of his literacy-related play; but even though his interactions with his teacher were more collaborative, he tended to respond to suggestions as directions and questions as criticism.

The most significant changes in Jack's orientation toward literacy occurred in the context of relations with peers, where he showed more initiative and confidence. In kindergarten a major transformation took place when he began to use reading and writing as instruments in his play with peers. And in second grade he began to treat the text rather than his performance of it as the focus of peer interaction. Then he participated in truly collaborative text-focused activities and considered audience response as a tool for evaluating and changing his text rather than solely as a judgment of his performance. Although Jack's relations with male peers provided the context in which he exercised most fully his own problem-solving capabilities, there were tensions here as well. For peer-defined agendas were often far removed from Jack's experiences and in conflict with what he perceived as his teachers' expectations. Since Jack wanted to please everyone, he alternated between one set of criteria and the other, only occasionally happening upon a good fit of both with his own interests and resources.

BEATRIX

First Grade

Beatrix began her first-grade year as more of an observer than an active participant in whole class activities. She sat quietly during open-ended discussions or group singing, but she answered specific questions that connected to her experience and participated in familiar structures like the authors' circle, asking questions to make sure she understood the writing of her peers. During writing time, she worked alone on personal narratives about family and neighborhood experiences. She did not appear to be uncomfortable with either Mr. Sullivan or her peers in one-on-one interactions. She talked easily with her teacher in writing conferences and read happily with other girls in friend-to-friend reading. It may have been the dynamics of the peer culture that somewhat intimidated her in larger groups as her peers became more interested in, and adept at, negotiating status issues.

Beatrix continued as she had in kindergarten to read and write for her own pleasure and in her own way. She was fully engaged in writing; she sometimes brought in writing she had done at home and even wrote about writing and publishing. She was quite comfortable with her invented spelling, even though it was now easier for her to read standard spelling. She said of her own writing, "After a while I can't read what I write. Unless I sound it out instead of just doing it." Although she did not gear her writing to teacher or peer approval, she often picked up on topics or writing strategies that were suggested by Mr. Sullivan or other children. For example, she began to use dialogue in her writing after it was discussed in relation to the stories Mr. Sullivan read to the class; and following discussion of the "lessons" of fairy tales, she described one of her personal narratives as good because "it kinda does a lesson—if you do something, it could happen so you can't go again, so you do what your mom says." In one instance of peer influence, her first movement toward writing fantasy fiction came when she was sitting next to Margaret one day and both of their stories included dream sequences.

Similar evidence spoke to her pleasure and self-reliance in reading, unhampered by concern for the approval of others. She often chose to read familiar texts that Mr. Sullivan had read or that she had read with him, but it appeared to be because she enjoyed recreating the pleasure of stories she liked rather than because she was sure she could read them. One day when a peer pointed out that she had already read the books she chose, she said, "Yeah, but they're so good." She was happy to accept assistance with unfamiliar words when reading with peers, but she also

had strategies for getting on with the reading on her own. And her reading of difficult or unfamiliar texts with Mr. Sullivan was always focused on getting to meaning, even if that meant making up the story when she couldn't decipher the print.

By December almost half of Beatrix's writing was fiction that she labeled "pretend." She told a graduate student who interviewed her about writing that she liked writing pretend stories better than true stories, and she said that she liked to write "because I think about things that are really neat and then I can write about it." She reported that she got her ideas from stories and from things that she did. Even though the characters in her pretend stories were often rainbows, the events were the realistic happenings of her everyday life and the theme was usually making friends. The influence of fairy tales also showed in two stories that she began but did not complete, one about a girl named Rose whose father was cutting wood, and another about three trees and a witch.

Although Beatrix often had suggestions for other children's pieces at the authors' circle and was very interested in their suggestions for her stories, there was no evidence that she revised her pieces to incorporate ideas she got there. In January, however, she came to the authors' circle with the beginning of her story about the three trees and got many suggestions for resolving the problem that the three trees were having with the witch. Over the next several days, she completed the story, integrating two of the ideas she got from peers into what was a full-fledged fairy tale in structure and in style. It began, "Once there were three trees. A witch lived not far from them. Every day the witch would come and take a branch from them. They did not like that so they thought of a plan to kill the witch or stop her." The story incorporated stock fairy tale characters and the number three, which Mr. Sullivan had pointed out as a common motif in fairy tales. Beatrix even used graphic devices to heighten the drama of the story, ending one page, "The witch was just about to take a stick when..." and continuing on the next, "B-A-N-G!! They dropped the house." Her accomplishment was acknowledged when she shared the published version with her classmates and they broke into spontaneous applause.

During this same period, Beatrix was working more collaboratively with female peers, initially because Mr. Sullivan assigned writing partners to work on the computer, but later by her own choice. In general she seemed more assertive than before in relations with peers, most of the time staying out of contests and conflicts but defending herself if hassled. She continued to make her own reading choices, undaunted by the more difficult books that some girls were attempting when they read together. In friend-to-friend reading, she accepted her partners' assistance but did not allow them to take over the reading or dominate the interaction. She was also more comfortable reading with boys than some of the girls were when Mr. Sullivan assigned mixed-gender pairs, and she often chose to sit at

writing tables with boys. Her status as a loner coincided with her relative disregard for group norms, whether they were sponsored by adults or peers. She did not engage in the peer interactions that seemed designed to establish who was a member of which groups, including gender, nor was she particularly concerned about violating protocol. When Mr. Sullivan was delayed in stenciling the title on one of her published books, Beatrix wrote it herself, much to the dismay of a peer who thought she needed permission from the teacher.

In February, even before Mr. Sullivan requested it, Beatrix returned to writing mostly personal narrative. She worked on several pieces simultaneously, switching from one piece to another when she got stuck. Asked what she did when she didn't know how to end a piece, she said, "I work on another piece until I've thought of a way to finish it." She made word level revisions as she wrote, usually in the direction of a more literary style. She responded with interest to the focus on language in poetry, and she often used her poetry journal to play with language. One day she began a poem called "Happy Feelings" in the following way: "A swishing, swashing wave swung a drum onto the beach. The dripping drum was shining in the sun." Although she enjoyed reading poetry, it was never her sole choice, and there is no record of her reading a poem to the class in the poetry circle, a forum in which many children enjoyed performing for their peers.

Although she was already writing personal narrative by her own choice, Beatrix did not become very engaged in the assignments to write a self-portrait and a family portrait. The piece which she titled "The Birds, and Also My Self-Portrait" described an event rather than her expertise, and was published only when Mr. Sullivan suggested she select several short pieces to publish together in a single book. Her portrait of her father described his work and then shifted into personal narrative before she abandoned it. Assigned topics simply did not hold her attention.

Beatrix continued to read a variety of books, including new and more difficult ones. She described herself as an "okay" reader and said she preferred reading to writing because "I can read more faster than I can write." She was equally happy reading by herself or with other girls. She was not happy doing the skills assessment test that Mr. Sullivan gave in April, but she did well on it. When she was interviewed about reading near the end of the year, she said she read "favorite books, books that I think are good, anything I feel like." She identified a Disney retelling of fairy tales as her favorite book and Ezra Jack Keats as her favorite author. When asked who she usually read with, she responded, "I usually read with no one." But when she did, she said, she liked to read with Chrissie because they were friends and the same size (Beatrix was still smaller than her same-age peers), and with Beverly because "[she's] a better reader than I am, so words I don't know, she knows."

In the final weeks of the school year, Beatrix wrote more fiction again,

sometimes in collaboration with female peers. Her final published book was a story about a little girl who liked to read poems, and the text included some original poems. In a writing interview with Mrs. Benedict, Beatrix chose this and other fictional pieces as her favorites. About the source of this recent story, Beatrix said, "I thought about how much I like reading and I thought of a little girl who liked to write." She also mentioned a book she had seen that had more than one piece in it. As usual, Beatrix was well aware of her resources for writing ideas—personal experience and books. She was also increasingly attuned to audience response. Earlier in the year, she had indicated that her decision to publish was based on her own liking of a piece; now she added the criterion "if a lot of people say they like something." She had difficulty reading some of her writing to Mrs. Benedict and identified the source of the problem as her invented spelling. She had recently been paying more attention to conventions like standard spelling and capitalization, apparently realizing that they made her text more readable for herself and others.

In my interview with both parents in July, Beatrix's mother reported that she wasn't writing as much at home as she had before but was reading enthusiastically. She had read *Charlotte's Web* the week before and had selected *A Wrinkle in Time* for purchase at the bookstore, both more difficult books than she had been reading in the classroom. She had also seen the movie "The Return of the Jedi" at a birthday party and insisted on reading all the Star Wars books. She still enjoyed being read to, but all these books, she read on her own. Her father reported that she read anything that had print on it, including the lures in his tackle box.

We had an extended discussion about risk taking, because the risks that Beatrix seemed to take easily in reading and writing, she did not take in all areas. Although her mother said that Beatrix was as comfortable playing with boys as with girls, she saw her as not taking risks in social situations. The examples she gave involved large groups or strangers. And although her father described her unflinching curiosity about the still-beating heart of a trout they cleaned together, he asserted that she simply wouldn't take risks and that she saw reading and writing as safe choices because they were not risky. The examples he gave of riskiness involved the possibility of physical danger, like learning to ride a bike. Both parents saw their two daughters as quite different in this respect and described Beatrix's younger sister as a big risk-taker. There may have been some gender boundaries drawn in the valuing of various kinds of risk-taking since Beatrix's mother sounded a generally more protective note in this discussion in response to her husband's more critical tone. If this reflected a prevalent pattern in their responses to Beatrix's behavior, it may have led to her perception of Mr. Sullivan's classroom as a more challenging environment in comparison to her perception of security with Mrs. Benedict, though neither teacher could be described as fitting gender stereotypes in this regard.

Second Grade

Whether it was due to the familiarity or gender of her teacher, or to greater comfort with her peers, Beatrix settled right into her niche in second grade. She wrote personal narrative, fantasy fiction, and even a space wars story in the early weeks of the year; and she participated regularly in the authors' circle, sharing her own pieces to get additional ideas and offering well-focused suggestions for her peers' writing. Most of her ideas for her fiction came from books that she read, like a story about the "longest car" that was sparked by a Shel Silverstein poem. But her stories were always original creations rather than rehashes of her favorite books.

Beatrix made diverse reading choices, including new categories like mysteries and "true books," and she reached for a book to fill any waiting time in the classroom. She scored 1½ to 2 years above grade level on a standardized reading test and on the informal reading inventory and was placed in the next to the top reading group. Her wide reading provided more than topics for her writing; it contributed to her style as well. After Halloween she wrote a story about the Littles's Halloween which included the following passage: "He was so surprised that he jumped out of his chair. He yelled, 'Lucy, stop yelling! It's only me in my costume.' So Lucy stopped screaming and looked at him carefully. Then she said, 'So you are.'"

There was also evidence of her teacher's influence on Beatrix's reading and writing. She often selected books that Mrs. Benedict had read or recommended to the class, and she quickly internalized the reading conference questions that her teacher modeled and used them to discuss books in peer conferences. After she listened to Mrs. Benedict describe a 'flashback' to another student one day, she wrote a personal narrative which included one. She still did not like direct teacher assignments, however, and treated the spelling lists and animal reports as unpleasant chores. She described her report on bees as her worst piece of writing even though it presented a great deal of interesting information in a lively personal voice. She also seemed to have a real interest in other students' reports and always had additional information to offer when they shared them. The issue was clearly choice, because in January she wrote an unassigned report on parakeets, using all the techniques Mrs. Benedict had taught.

Immediately juxtaposed with her report on parakeets was a personal narrative that demonstrated her growing sense of the character of different genres. The subject of this piece was also birds, but the treatment of the subject was totally different. Under the title, "The Calling of Birds," Beatrix crossed out her first lead, "Once there was a bird," and began again: "One night I went out. I sat on the step and listened to the birds. It sounded like the playing of flutes." She also wrote a fictional story in chapters, using the chapter titles to remind her of the intended storyline as she composed.

Although she was still not very interested in editing her pieces for standard conventions, she began to make multiple attempts at spelling words in an effort to match standard spellings.

During this period she expanded her reading interests to include the choose-your-own-adventure books that most of the boys but few girls were reading. She even wrote one herself, after her friend Chrissie shared one she had written that was more like *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* than the heroic epics the boys were writing. When graduate student researcher Lenore Carlisle asked her what she read in a midyear reading interview, she replied, "Well, I read a lot of books that I think are good." She identified her favorites as choose-your-own-adventures because they were long but quick to read, funny poems, and Jane Yolen's *Rainbow Rider*. She said that it was important to know how to read "because mostly in books is how you learn things."

From January on, Beatrix's interaction with peers increased considerably. Even during writing, instead of her previous oblivion to what was going on around her, she was quite socially active. She shared her writing more with peers during this time and even participated in 'goofing off.' She admired George's ability to entertain an audience with his humorous writing, and she wrote her first story which seemed to satisfy her own ambitions in this direction. It was called "The Sneat, the Snoot, and the Fyier," and it included elements of Dr. Seuss, fairy tales, and the Frog and Toad books in a crowd-pleasing combination. Through all her experimentation with topics and genres, Beatrix had shown little interest in publication; but this became her first published book since one in the fall.

At times her interest in peer response overruled her usual discrimination about the ideas she got at the authors' circle. She followed George's suggestions for one story she shared there even though they did not really fit with the storyline she had constructed so far. She eventually abandoned the story without completing it. This seemed to be part of a larger pattern in relation to her newfound attention to peer interaction and norms. She seemed to compare herself unfavorably with peers and, for the first time, visibly doubted her own capabilities. Her feelings may have been reflected in several stories she wrote about small creatures in which the general theme was the difficulties and dangers of being invisible and relatively powerless.

There was also an event during this period that signaled her awareness of, and accommodation to, gender divisions. The children had established pen pal relationships with a class in another state, and Beatrix was under the mistaken impression that her pen pal was a boy. She had already written her letter to Don when Mrs. Benedict informed her that Don was actually Dawn. Beatrix immediately changed her statement, "My favorite thing is football," to read, "My favorite thing is school."

Although she wrote a story based on her favorite African tale, the group

reports on Africa and China did not engage her. Again, the information seemed to be of interest to her, but writing the reports was not. In an end-of-year writing interview with Mrs. Benedict, she said, "I hate reports. There was one report I liked best. The ones I do without anyone saying to me I have to." She identified her best writing as fiction that had "funny characters like elves and elephants who talk and have funny adventures." She also identified the peers who gave her ideas for writing and described the qualities of their writing that appealed to her. Her reading choices at the end of the year included fantasy, biography, humor, and animal stories. She read a piece of historical fiction one day with Lenore Carlisle that was designated as being at the fifth grade level; and although she had difficulty with proper names and unfamiliar vocabulary, she followed the storyline. When she was asked what she thought of the main character, she replied, "She was brave, but she was pretty boring. (Why?) 'Cause she always did everything they said to do. She was obedient."

When I visited Beatrix at the end of the summer to return her second-grade writing, we spent almost an hour and a half reviewing all her writing and talking about her summer reading. Her father and sister joined us for a while at the beginning and her mother at the end, but Beatrix was absorbed in sharing her writing and reading with me. She remembered a great deal about even her earliest kindergarten writing, and despite her profession that she couldn't read it, deciphered some of it. In constructing her collection of Beatrix's best writing, she reviewed all of her 12 published books, reading most of them aloud to me. She eliminated only four from her best, and then reviewed all of her unpublished second grade writing and included much of it. She reiterated that she hated reports but added, "I should like that [New England Inn] report 'cause I'm goin' there for dinner today." She then told me facts that she had learned about the inn from her visit there for the report.

Her favorite published book was *The Sneat, the Snoot, and the Fyier*, of which she said, "I like it because it isn't real. I like the ones that are just made up. I read 'em all the time. I also like to read long books. If it has a good title, I'm reading it." This led into a discussion of the two "really good books" she had read over the summer, *The Trumpet of the Swan* and *The Secret Garden*. She told me that she hadn't done much writing over the summer because she went to Brownie day camp for 4 weeks, and animatedly described the social and physical activities she had participated in there. When I gave her her "thank you" gift, *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, she read the title and said, "Thanks. I think I'll like this one."

From kindergarten through second grade, Beatrix did not alter her basic orientation toward literacy as a pleasurable way of exploring the world and making personal meaning of it. She was wide-reaching in

her use of models and resources for reading and writing, but the choice had to be hers. She did not actively resist, but merely tolerated teacher assignments. This was true whether her teacher was male or female; she took what both had to offer yet was comfortably independent from both. Because of her family experiences, Beatrix could assume that both male and female adults would share and support her interests and self-direction in literacy, and her teachers did not give her reason to change that assumption. She appeared to have felt somewhat more secure in Mrs. Benedict's classroom than in Mr. Sullivan's, but this may have had as much to do with her relations with peers as with her teachers.

Although Beatrix was sociable and enjoyed sharing her own reading and writing and that of her peers, she was most outgoing in one-on-one interactions or highly focused large group activities. She was not active in, and did not appear to be concerned about, the group- and status-defining interactions that occupied many of her peers in first and second grade. Until the second half of second grade, her focus in shared literacy events always seemed to be on the satisfaction they gave her as a reader, writer, or listener. When she became more socially active and began to focus on satisfying her audience in particular ways, her confidence was somewhat shaken by comparing herself to peers. And until that time, she also appeared to pay little attention to socially defined gender boundaries, at least in the sense that her interest in a topic or activity was not guided by its gender appropriateness. Thus for Beatrix the emergence of the peer culture and her increasing attention to it introduced tensions she had not previously experienced around her competence as a reader and writer and the gender appropriateness of particular activities. Her very immersion in literary texts may also have contributed to tensions around gender, following Gilbert's (1989a) argument that girls are written into subordinate positions in much of children's literature. Although Beatrix showed interest in reading and writing the stories valued by the boys and found an obedient female protagonist boring, she did not sustain her engagement in adventure stories.

JANE

First Grade

In contrast to Beatrix's apparent unconcern about either teacher- or peer-defined expectations, Jane seemed apprehensively attuned to both. At the beginning of first grade, she appeared to be trying to figure out both sets of rules and how to follow them and still maintain her independence. She

was uncharacteristically outspoken in introducing a new boy to the class on the first day of school, perhaps because she felt sure that she knew more than anyone else about him because he lived in her apartment complex. Following that, her voice was not heard for more than a month in any large group meeting. During workshop periods, she alternated between meticulous attention to what she was doing and periods of watching or socializing with peers. Her interactions with peers often involved issues of defining group and individual boundaries, as when she told another girl that she could not join their Brownie troop because it had enough people in it already or slapped Luke to stop him from running his finger down her arm during group meeting.

Jane seemed apprehensive in one-to-one interactions with Mr. Sullivan. She declined his invitations to confer about her writing when he gave her a choice; and she was quite nervous when she read with him, as she was with other adults as well. She was more relaxed reading with peers, but she always chose texts that were very easy for her to read. Despite her apparent anxiety about reading, she did say in the reading interview that she thought she was a good reader. Jane's early writing was all fiction, but her first completed and published story seemed to reflect the tension she was feeling herself about keeping everything under control. It was titled *The Flying Kite* and read: "Here is a little girl. She is playing with her kite. She was not holding on tight. She let go of the kite. She let it go and it flew away."

In mid-October Jane began to participate more fully in large group activities. Much of her participation revolved around the Winnie-the-Pooh stories she loved. On the same day that she appeared in her first group dramatization of a Pooh story, she also offered her first comment at the authors' circle. Another day she worked in a small group with Mr. Sullivan composing a story about Pooh's birthday, and a few days later she began writing her own Pooh story, which she shared a week later at the authors' circle. She asked for comments and questions, but said she was not going to add anything to this piece that she wanted to publish. It followed closely the plot of the Milne story about Pooh and the bees at the honeytree; but within this familiar framework, Jane wrote a piece that was richer in characterization and dialogue than anything she had previously written. Her "About the Author" page read, "I wanted to write about Pooh because I like Pooh stories."

Jane's confidence and risk taking continued to grow over the following months. She was very engaged in the fairy tales that Mr. Sullivan read to the class; she sat close to him, offered comments during discussions, and participated frequently in dramatizations of the stories. She still did not participate much in the authors' circle, though, and did not want to confer about her writing until she felt it was finished. It was as if she believed that the writing would not be hers anymore if she listened to others' reactions or

ideas. And, in fact, she often seemed to spend her time writing in search of material that she could shape into a coherent whole. She abandoned several fictional leads before she found such a topic in the class's attendance at a performance of *The Nutcracker*. She worked for a month and a half on a story entitled *The Dancing Elves*, which borrowed the magical transformation theme from *The Nutcracker* and the fairy tales she loved. Her story described in detail two children's anticipation of Christmas, the arrival of Santa Claus, and the children's Christmas morning excitement before it ended somewhat abruptly with the children's discovery the next morning that the boy's army of toy elves had come to life in the night. Although the literary models had given Jane a framework for a story from the fantasy world that she entered in books, her story was most expansive where it represented a child's immediate experience of Christmas.

Jane's reading also became less constrained during this period. She made more diverse choices in her reading with peers, and she was more comfortable reading unfamiliar text with Mr. Sullivan. She still looked to him for permission to skip words or make meaningful substitutions, but once she had it she used a variety of strategies to make sense of what she read. When she knew her reading was being assessed on the informal reading inventory at midyear, she appeared somewhat nervous but successfully read material that was designated as third-grade level.

After her story about the dancing elves, Jane branched out in two new directions in her writing. She wrote her first personal narrative about a family trip even before Mr. Sullivan requested that all the children write personal narrative for a while. In this and subsequent true pieces, including her self-portrait and her portrait of her mother as an expert knitter, Jane gave a straightforward chronicle of the facts. She expressed little sense of drama about the realities of her life. She also began to co-author pieces with female peers. All of these continued the Christmas theme that she had written about in *The Dancing Elves*, and one was a rewriting of pieces that the two girls had previously written separately. The emphasis here seemed to be on the social business of collaborating and coincided with Jane's apparent sense that she was accepted by the group of girls she admired.

In February and March two important new forces influenced Jane's reading and writing: poetry and Miss Pardon, the student teaching intern. Both appealed to and nurtured Jane's sense of herself as an artist. Miss Pardon was a musician, and the poetry lessons she taught focused on the music of language rather than the rollicking fun Mr. Sullivan communicated in his reading of poetry. After Miss Pardon introduced the haiku as a poetic form, Jane lay awake in bed that night counting syllables in the haiku she was composing. She dictated it the next day for Miss Pardon to write: "How the wind does blow. You can see the leaves blowing. Through the air

today." Poetry became a mainstay of Jane's reading and writing; her reading of poetry was slow and deliberate, and her writing of it focused on word choice and order.

Jane clearly felt a special kinship with Miss Pardon, and she participated enthusiastically in the musical that her new teacher had composed for the class to perform. The theme of the musical was the coming of spring to the animals in the forest, and much of Jane's poetry dealt with the topic of spring as well. During the weeks of rehearsing the play, Jane also wrote a long fictional story called *Meghan and John and the Winter That Would Not End*, which described two children's visit to the Wise Old Owl who directed them to the cave where spring was sleeping. There was no question that preparing for and performing the musical for parents was the highlight of Jane's first grade year when she wrote about it in a piece called *The Musical*. Her real world finally had something of fairy tales in it.

In the final 2 months of the year, Jane wrote a long piece of realistic fiction about a birthday party and began some personal narratives before she found another fantasy topic that engaged her. This story, called *The Purple City That Changed to Rainbow Color*, she identified as her favorite in an interview with Mrs. Benedict and said she got the idea from a television program. She said that she liked her pretend stories the best and that what made a piece good was if she worked on it for a long time. Getting ideas was the most difficult part of writing, she said, and when one piece became boring she worked on another until she was ready to return to the first with new ideas. The decision to publish was based on her sense that a piece of writing had reached an appropriate ending. She seemed to have a strong sense of the need for completeness in a story; a piece of writing was good if she had enough ideas to bring it to some kind of logical endpoint.

In the classroom Jane continued to read poetry and familiar books that were not difficult for her, but she reported reading longer books at home like *Pippi Longstocking* and *Little House on the Prairie*. In the reading interview she selected pretend books as her favorite reading; and she identified Beverly as a good reader, offering the explanation, "She just must have learned earlier than I did." But when asked if she was a good reader herself, she responded affirmatively and said she liked reading.

Jane's mother confirmed her daughter's avid reading in my interview with her at year's end. She said that somewhere in the middle of the year, Jane "took off" and "she just reads everything now." She still liked to be read to, including things she could read herself because she wanted the closeness with her mother, but she was now reading by herself books like *Pippi Longstocking* that had been an earlier favorite when her mother read it to her. For a while, her mother said, Jane had been doing a lot of writing at home and taking it into school. "She really loved doing poetry," she reported. Jane's mother also described a conference she had had with Mr.

Sullivan at midyear because she could not believe his statement that Jane was making excellent progress in spelling. Even then Jane had been spelling 50% of the words in her writing conventionally, and by year's end she was close to 90% conventional spelling. Her mother was still bothered by the mistakes, but reported that Jane rebuffed her attempts at correction. Despite her concern about spelling, Jane's mother felt that the approach to reading and writing had been "just perfect" for Jane because it gave her an outlet for her creativity. She described Jane's character as similar to her father's, shy and sensitive, and hoped that Jane would continue writing outside of school even if, like her father, she came to hate school.

Second Grade

Jane began second grade with her usual cautious approach. She attended closely to Mrs. Benedict's modeling of writing, but she did not participate in large group discussions or authors' circle. She spent all of September writing a long chronicle of a family trip to the West Coast, of which one chapter was eventually published. She did not appear to be very engaged in this writing, nor did her written description of the trip show any sense of excitement. She wrote in spurts surrounded by periods of watching and socializing with peers. Although her scores on the reading assessments ranged from 2 to 3 years above grade level and she was placed in the top reading group, she most often chose to read books that were easy for her. When she read a Jane Yolen book with Lenore Carlisle, however, she noted its similarity to fairy tales and commented on the writing style of fairy tales as having "different kinds of sentences."

Over the next couple of months Jane slowly moved away from her safe choices. She spoke up occasionally in the authors' circle and more often in the smaller conference group. She also paid a great deal of attention to social issues with peers during writing time and appeared to be competing for the friendship of Beverly, who was widely regarded as the best reader and writer in the class and whose time was being monopolized by another girl. Jane's social status seemed to be threatened by this competition, and her behavior geared toward insuring her inclusion in the group of girls who were at the center of female social life in the classroom.

Jane also moved away from personal narrative to a familiar fictional topic. She began writing another Pooh story and shared it at the authors' circle, but said she did not want any response to it. She worked on it some more, then abandoned it for a while to record school routines in a personal narrative. Eventually she returned to it, completing and publishing it. This and subsequent fictional stories were characterized by chapters of extensive set-up followed by quick resolution. It was as if the elaborate writing was a way of thinking about the characters and their problem, and once

she saw the solution the piece was finished in her mind. She was very comfortable with the structure of the animal reports, perhaps partly because she did not feel the burden of creating and resolving a storyline.

During this period Jane's reading became more diverse and difficult. She chose books by Jane Yolen after Mrs. Benedict read them to the class, and also longer books like *The Rescuers*. She read a section from *The Moffats* with Lenore; and although she kept saying that she didn't know a lot of the words, she said afterward that she wanted to read more of this "really, really good" book. When she was interviewed by Lenore early in January, Jane said she liked to read fiction and identified fairy tales, mysteries, and poetry as her most frequent reading choices. "I like to read things that aren't true," she said; asked why, she replied, "I don't know really. It's just more fun." Her response to a question about the importance of reading emphasized its external consequences, however: "like if you're older and you have to read something for a report or something, if you don't know how to read it, you're not going to know what information to put into your report."

Jane's writing did not immediately reflect her more adventurous reading. Perhaps she was consolidating her control of the problem-resolution plot structure in two tightly constructed stories that were shorter and less lively than those she had been writing. She always attempted to follow up on teacher modeling and instruction, however, and began to reach a bit in response to Mrs. Benedict's lessons. One day her teacher gave several examples of authors' use of descriptive language and asked the children to find examples in the books they were reading. Jane found a lyrical passage describing the river in *The Wind in the Willows*, which her reading group was reading. Later, Mrs. Benedict talked about story leads with Jane's conference group and asked them to think about different ways to begin a story. Jane immediately looked at the beginning of her story, "Sarah and the Animals," and wrote a new lead: "One day a little girl was walking through the woods. The woods look like this: There were big, leafy overgrown trees, flowers colored light blue, pink, white, and purple, and a tumbly, rumbly, squmly brook." A few weeks later Jane had finished a story about a Pooh-like bear that, like most of her stories, ended abruptly. After a conference in which Mrs. Benedict elicited more description of the resolution, Jane expanded the ending.

At the same time Jane also opened herself to more influence by peers in her writing. Following Beverly's lead, she attempted a mystery story but dropped it quickly. She was an animated participant in her conference group, asking not for general suggestions but for specific feedback about her own plans. She remained firmly in control of decisions about her writing, including the decision to publish. Choosing among three completed pieces which one to publish, she selected an earlier story even though she acknowledged that peers would like her recent "Beechy Bear"

story better or her lively personal narrative about her visit with a local author. Her judgment was accurate; "Beechy Bear" was later selected by a panel of students for publication in the school's literary magazine.

Jane was regularly sustaining reading of longer books now, including those by authors Thornton Burgess and Judy Blume. She was quite active in the discussions by her reading group and extended her observations to the books she read on her own, describing the difference between the portrayal of rabbits by Burgess and Beatrix Potter, for example. Although she was still quiet in whole class discussions of books, she enjoyed Mrs. Benedict's reading of poetry and memorized several poems that were displayed on the poetry bulletin board. At the end of the year, Jane was reading poetry, realistic fiction, and, as always, fantasy. Of her favorites, she said, "I like things like C. S. Lewis books when people go to different lands. I like them because they have a lot of different adventures on the way."

Jane's engagement in the community reports was dependent upon the topic, and she was not very interested in the local inn she visited or the African wetlands. But she loved discovering and writing about the poetry of China and said she wished she had gone to visit the house of a famous poet for her local report. Her final writing of the year included more fantasy fiction, some personal narrative, and a piece of realistic fiction. When Mrs. Benedict asked her to select her best writing of the year, she chose all fiction except the account of her visit with a local author. Describing her best writing, she said, "I have to have a lot of ideas. I think them up the night before. I just like dream about them all night so I sort of get the whole story in my mind and come to school the next day to write." She said she liked her conference group better than the authors' circle because "they pay more attention," and she would rather have peers ask questions to help her think about her pieces than make specific suggestions. She included herself in a group of the four best writers in the class; she valued the writing of Beverly and Chrissie for its descriptive detail and said of George's humorous writing, "The stories he thinks up, I would never think up those kinds of stories." Jane was very perceptive about the qualities of her classmates' writing, yet steadfast in following her own path.

Jane was very quiet when I visited her at home at the end of the summer to return her second grade writing. She looked through her kindergarten writing with her mother and me, but we talked more about it than she did. When I asked her to select pieces for a collection of her best writing, she quickly chose four published books from first and second grade, all fiction. From her unpublished writing, she added only "Beechy Bear." She told me she hadn't done any writing over the summer, but she had an idea for a fictional story based on her trip to Niagara Falls. She had been reading lots of Judy Blume books and said she preferred to read to herself all the time

now. She accepted my thank-you gift, a copy of *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, without comment but not without interest.

Jane's attention to and concern about adult standards and expectations remained an important part of her orientation toward literacy from kindergarten through second grade, even though she became less apprehensive about adult standards over time and more confident of her ability to meet them. And although she adopted to some degree her teachers' acceptance of deviations from adult conventions as a necessary part of the learning process, she was more comfortable taking small, private risks than big, public ones. She wanted to know the words before she read the story, and she wanted to have her own story in mind before she committed it to paper. The stories she loved to hear and read shaped her standards even more than her teachers' instruction did, although she seldom explored new territory in literacy without an adult guide. Whether it was a teacher-regulated activity or one regulated by her own sense of adult standards, Jane wanted to be sure of reaching her destination before she began the journey.

This apprehension was apparent whether Jane's teacher was male or female, though it seemed to take her longer to feel comfortable with Mr. Sullivan than with Mrs. Benedict. And it was with the female intern, Miss Pardon, that she took the greatest risks and appeared to feel the strongest identification. To the extent that Jane's apprehension was related to questions about the value of literacy as a female domain, the fact that Mr. Sullivan not only valued but shared her literacy interests may have contributed to a reduction in gender-related tensions and provided important support for the risks she took with Miss Pardon.

Jane's attention to how she measured up against adult standards also carried over into her interaction with peers. As she became more socially active in kindergarten, she often competed with peers by asserting her competence in relation to adult standards. And although she looked to peers for models of literacy behavior, she also strongly resisted any direct influence from them. As the peer culture became stronger and more complex during first grade, Jane had even more rules to attend to and follow—rules that sometimes directly conflicted with teacher expectations. Her relations and status with female peers became as important to Jane as measuring up to adult standards, yet she valued her independence as well and seemed to feel it threatened by all these demands. If the goal of managing her status in relation to all these expectations seemed overwhelming, it's no wonder that she valued the private world of fantasy fiction as an escape from her everyday reality.

In Mr. Sullivan's classroom Jane was able to explore that fantasy world in a more public way, through artistic and dramatic responses with peers to the fantasy literature she loved and ultimately through her writing. Slowly through first and second grade, she found that she could manage herself successfully in relations with peers; and she began to value the contribution they could make to her reading and writing as long as she could shape the interaction to her ends. But for the most part, Jane continued to preserve two separate worlds of literacy—the public displays of reading and writing in which the adult in her mind was always measuring her competence, and the private world of exciting, larger-than-life adventures. This separation may be connected to tensions around Jane's vision of her present and future life as a female. The predominance of transformation themes in her fantasy writing may reflect a longing for a world where she was not written into colorless female domesticity.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN CHILDREN'S ORIENTATIONS TOWARD LITERACY

Examination of the first- and second-grade learning biographies of Luke, Jack, Beatrix, and Jane shows significant areas of continuity and change in their orientations toward literacy. The changes are best characterized by considering the ways children constructed their relations with other people in classroom literacy events, especially around issues of gender and work. Two important sets of relations may be distinguished, if not totally separated—those with adult teachers and those with peers.

In general, the children's relations with their teachers changed during the first- and second-grade years because of their increasing attention to peer relations. There was a sense that, while teachers remained important, peers were becoming the community of primary reference for self-definition and evaluation. Kegan (1982) describes the elementary school years as a stage of psychological development where peers begin to become a culturing environment for each other. Of this important shift, he says, "For the first time, the human context of embeddedness is, in part, peopled by age mates, or actually more than age mates—'developmental contemporaries'" (p. 166). Davies (1982) offers a more socially oriented explanation of the emergence of children's culture, which includes the idea that the balance of power is more equitable in peer relations than in relations with adults, giving children the opportunity to work out status issues on their own terms.

The growing importance of peer culture in these classrooms, along with the teachers' encouragement of student initiative and regulation in literacy activities, may have contributed to the children's increasing

acceptance and use of the teacher as a resource for, rather than a director or judge of, their reading and writing. Beatrix had treated adults in this way from the day I met her, but Luke, Jack, and Jane had in various ways defined adults as regulating their literacy activities. All three significantly modified their relations with adults. Luke came to treat his teachers as helpful collaborators in achieving his own purposes for reading and writing and no longer categorically resisted adult-sponsored activities if they suited his own interests. Jack, too, became more willing to accept adult input as a resource, but he remained sensitive to it as an implicit direction or evaluation as well; and he was quite comfortable when his teachers took a more directive role. Jane also moved toward treating her teachers as resources rather than directors, but continued to expect and be apprehensive about their evaluation of her performance.

The net effect of these changes was to alter, at least to some extent, the children's orientations toward literacy as adult-imposed and regulated work. In making this shift, the children also became more engaged in literacy as a self-sponsored activity. The reduction of teacher regulation did not necessarily mean that the children assumed full control of their own reading and writing, however, but rather that in some cases they looked to peers for direction instead. This was most true for Jack, somewhat for Luke, and very little for Jane, a comparison that is elaborated later in the discussion of peer relations.

The impact of their teachers' gender on children's orientations toward literacy is not easy to separate from other factors, but there is evidence that the boys identified with Mr. Sullivan's model of literacy as a male activity. Luke, in particular, became much more visibly engaged in reading and writing in Mr. Sullivan's classroom and was more interested in sharing literacy activities with him than he had been with Mrs. Benedict or Mrs. Gundersheim. Changes were not as striking in Jack's case, because he was more interested in meeting adult expectations in general, but his enthusiastic participation in public performances of plays and poetry seemed to be based on his teacher's model. Both Luke and Jack appeared to feel a kind of companionship with Mr. Sullivan that was different from their relations with Mrs. Benedict; the fact that Luke got into less 'trouble' in Mr. Sullivan's room and Jack into more may have been connected to this difference. There was also a telling difference in the ways both boys responded to literacy activities with Mr. Sullivan and those with Miss Pardon, the teaching intern, although gender was not the only variable here. In addition to changing the dynamics of teacher–student interactions, having a male teacher may have influenced peer interactions around literacy among the boys, expanding their sense of literacy as a male domain.

The girls showed very little change in their relations with male and female teachers. This is perhaps not too surprising, given the claim of Chodorow (1978) and others that it is more important for boys to claim their gender identity by renouncing females and female behavior than vice versa. Beatrix was somewhat less outgoing in whole class activities in Mr. Sullivan's class; but since she seemed comfortable with him in one-on-one conversations, it may be more reasonable to attribute this change to her relations with peers. The similarity in her response to both teachers is consistent with her father's role in her literacy activities at home and her general treatment of adults as equal partners in literacy.

Jane's response is somewhat harder to read. She was certainly quite reticent and apprehensive about reading and writing with Mr. Sullivan at the beginning of the year, but this was true in encounters with female teachers and researchers as well and may have been connected to the stress of figuring out new teacher and peer expectations. As Jane became more comfortable with her teacher and her peers, her risk taking far exceeded her kindergarten level. It's certainly possible that having a male teacher who shared her enjoyment of Winnie-the-Pooh and fairy tales and made school a dramatic and interesting place, may have opened a less constricted space for Jane's interest in literacy and contributed to the strong identification she experienced with the female teaching intern.

In general, it seems likely that having a male teacher who shared with them so warmly his deep investment in reading and writing broadened all the children's perceptions of the gender appropriateness of literacy in various forms, although this may also have been in contradiction to other experiences defining gender differentiations. It's interesting to note in this respect that, as a group, the boys were selective in which kinds of literacy modeled by Mr. Sullivan they adopted as their own. While they eagerly picked up the humorous and often 'naughty' poetry of Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky, they showed little interest in reading or writing fairy tales with each other despite the fact that Mr. Sullivan read them aloud for almost a month. Moreover, the role of the teacher in an invisible pedagogy put Mr. Sullivan in an even more contradictory position than it does women by Walkerdine's (1985) analysis, because the role of observing, following, and supporting children's initiatives is not only contrary to the behavior encouraged in learners but also to that generally valued in males. The boys signaled their attention to other discourses defining maleness by choosing to read and write about violence and using some forms of literacy in the classroom battle of the sexes, for example reading a Prelutsky anti-girl poem to taunt the girls.

As peer relations became more central to children's negotiation of

social status and identity, the role of peers in literacy events often shifted as well. The importance of these roles was acknowledged and supported by the teachers as they allowed and at times required the children to share literacy activities with each other. Because the peer culture was not sub rosa, as it is in many classrooms, the teachers had more opportunity to influence the dynamics of peer literacy transactions; but these dynamics were by no means under the teachers' control. And since the children tended to treat peer interaction as self-regulated activity (within limits prescribed by adults), their relations with peers in literacy activities were often different from their relations with adults. While their greater involvement in peer culture provided opportunities for constructing social relations that did not have the same tensions that some children experienced in relations with adults, their participation in peer culture also raised new tensions as well.

Beatrix initially made the least distinction between teachers and peers; she treated both as potential resources for reading and writing but used only the input that suited her own purposes. As she slowly became more active in the peer culture in second grade, audience response took on a new importance in evaluating the success of her writing and she appeared more vulnerable to peer judgment than she had been to teacher evaluation. In a sense, the entry into peer culture may have induced a kind of culture shock for Beatrix, because the culture of her parents and teachers had not prepared her for the boundary-defining dynamics of the peer culture.

Jane, on the other hand, extended her apprehensive attention to adults' evaluation of literacy to her relations with peers as well, and initially treated peers as competitors in the quest for status in adult terms. As the peer culture began to define its own terms for negotiating status, she became equally apprehensive about meeting peer standards. Once she had earned the acceptance of female peers, she began to treat them more as a resource; but she maintained close control of the input she solicited and accepted, and always weighed it against the adult-oriented standards in her own mind.

For Jack, the distinction between work and play led to different relations with adults and peers. When reading and writing became part of his play with peers in kindergarten, Jack entered into more collaborative relations with peers than he had with teachers and he sought to take the lead with peers rather than follow his teachers' lead. Although his behavior in activities with peers was quite different from his behavior with teachers, his goal was similar—to gain their approval of his performance. In both cases, he moved toward treating others as resources as well as judges, but his use of what others offered was geared toward pleasing his audience.

Where Jack's purposes for literacy were largely social, Luke's were almost entirely personal. Even when Luke began to accept adults as resources for meeting his own purposes in reading and writing, he had difficulty negotiating collaborative relations in literacy activities with peers. He tried to follow the agendas of male peers in reading and writing as a way of participating in the peer culture, but often chose to play the part of social manager or prankster instead. Thus while peer relations became the central arena for Jack's literacy learning, they were more of a sideshow for Luke, who did his 'real' reading and writing on his own.

For all four children the emergence of peer culture in the classroom introduced new tensions having to do with the initiation and regulation of literacy activities. In sharing literacy with peers, there was neither the adult's authority to regulate nor the adult's nurturance of self-regulation, so relations were both more equitable and more open to negotiation. In order to read or write with peers, or even to maintain social relations during literacy events, it was necessary to coordinate initiation and regulation with others, especially since teacher regulation was often minimal. Thus, even the most self-regulated children, like Beatrix, began to feel the press of peer agendas; and others experienced tensions around the competing agendas of peers, teachers, and themselves. Although tensions related to definitions of literacy as work or play originated in relations with adults, the peer culture also became an arena where the control of literacy activities was defined and contested.

Similarly, the peer culture became the primary site where gender relations were negotiated. In a sense the children as a group began to take over the definition of gender identity; in another sense the power of the dominant culture increased because the children's notions of gender were increasingly influenced by the media (including literature) and popular culture. This is consistent with the findings of several studies showing that children actively construct gender relations in the classroom that are often more traditional than those supported by their teachers (Best, 1983; Cone & Perez, 1986; Clarricoates, 1978; Grant, 1985). Although an extensive analysis of the data from this study might reveal more subtle ways in which gender relations were being negotiated in the peer culture, one very visible instance appeared in distinctions between the themes of the texts that were most popular with girls and with boys.

There were many categories of reading and writing that seemed to interest both genders equally—humor, poetry, animal stories, and biography, for example. Within the category of fantasy fiction, though, there were almost unbridgeable differences between the stories read and written by boys and girls. In general, girls chose to read fairy tales

and boys chose adventure stories, although fairy tales including trolls and dragons were also popular with boys. While children might read stories that had main characters of the opposite gender, the lead roles in their own stories were almost always of the same gender. Girls sometimes wrote about male leads, especially animals or fantasy characters like munchkins; boys never wrote about female leads.

Fantasy stories written by boys involved themes of physical combat and competition, disaster and rescue, whether they were based on media superheroes and space wars or literary adventure stories. The only female character that ever appeared was a boy's mother, whose only function was to feed him and put him to bed. The girls' fantasy stories involved searches or magical transformations—wishes, potions, events that were suddenly beautiful or strange, problematic perhaps, but not usually threatening, and problems were never resolved through violence. Instead of vast expanses of space or land and larger-than-life monsters, their stories created miniature worlds and creatures smaller than life. Male characters frequently appeared in supporting roles as fathers, brothers, and companions.

These themes were especially predominant in the pieces co-authored by peers, which with very rare exceptions were always fantasy fiction and were always written in same-gender pairs, suggesting that children were negotiating important gender issues in this writing. Steedman (1982) makes a similar argument about a piece of realistic fiction written collaboratively by three 8-year-old, working class girls who were exploring the role of the mother in the house and their feelings about it. She also notes that the boys in her classroom wrote very different kinds of stories, similar to those described above. In these classrooms, as in Steedman's, there was almost no cross-over between the public fantasy worlds of boys and girls; the dreams they dreamed and the parts they played in those dreams were bounded by gender. And those dreams and parts were reconstructions of and reactions to the images offered them by television, movies, and books.

As suggested by Gilbert (1989a), girls may have experienced tensions around these popular representations of female identity. Jane preferred reading and writing fantasy fiction, because it was more adventurous than her everyday life, but in the fantasies she wrote it was male characters who solved problems and had adventures, sometimes with female companions. Even her writing about transformation themes stayed close to home and did not develop the storyline past the transformation. She began, but quickly abandoned, a fantasy adventure and a mystery story with female protagonists. Beatrix had much more sense of drama about her everyday life and also wrote more exaggerated fantasies, but they, too, were filled with domestic images. She successfully completed a humorous adventure story with a male

protagonist and a story about a fairy with superhero qualities, but her attempts to write a space story and a choose-your-own-adventure piece foundered. It's interesting that neither girl wrote about conventional romantic themes, with helpless females rescued by handsome princes, but neither sustained writing about adventurous females either.

For the boys there may have been tensions of a different sort around living up to images of male heroism that bore little resemblance to their real lives. Jack's early attempts at fantasy adventures often turned into more domestic stories or included his mother as a supportive character. And his adventure stories were always less detailed and developed than his personal narratives about his family. Luke's adventure stories, on the other hand, never included the least hint of domesticity, and his personal narratives were usually about activities with male friends rather than his family. Yet his adventure stories were as skeletal as Jack's, all action and no plot or character development. Neither boy seemed to have much sense of their male heroes as real people, perhaps partly because of the frightening gap between aspiration and reality, but both felt a need to construct and identify with these heroic images of maleness.

This discussion of the changes over time in children's relations with adults and peers in literacy events has also indirectly identified the basic continuity in children's orientations toward literacy, for the changes always took place within the framework of children's primary investments in literacy. The pith at the core of each child's connection to literacy, visible even before they entered kindergarten, was like a musical theme that kept recurring in increasingly elaborate variations: Jack's attention to the social currency of reading and writing, Beatrix's engagement in reading and writing as a primary way of understanding and expanding her personal experience, Luke's targeted focus on reading and writing as an adjunct to his physical exploration of the world, and Jane's protection of a private fantasy world created through reading and writing. These investments that the children made in literacy, out of their own needs and desires and shaped in family relations, continued to define their participation in classroom literacy events, whether or not the investments were consistent with the teachers' pedagogy.

Tensions that children experienced in relation to these investments also showed a sometimes stubborn continuity, like persistent countermelodies in music. Some of the tensions resulted primarily from points where the children's orientations put them at odds with their teachers' pedagogy. Beatrix seemed to experience the least tension of any of the children, because her approach to literacy fit with her teachers' support of taking risks to solve self-defined problems in

reading and writing. The only tension she seemed to feel in this regard was when her teachers made choices for her, and her distaste for such activities persisted from kindergarten through second grade. Jack, on the other hand, never stopped expecting teachers to define and regulate his literacy activities and responded with dispatch when they did. His tension was with the expectation of self-initiated and regulated reading and writing, a tension that was reduced when he shifted his attention to reading and writing with peers. This gave him another form of external regulation of literacy, however, which sometimes led to tension between divergent peer and teacher expectations.

For other children, like Luke and Jane, the tensions they experienced with their teachers' pedagogy were grounded in tensions within their own orientations toward literacy. For them, acting on their investments in literacy was inhibited by conflicting desires and perceptions. Luke's resistance to activities he perceived as dominated by females initially left very little space for following his own interests when they led to print, especially if female adults tried to support his activity. This tension was greatly reduced as Luke began to share literacy activities with a male teacher and male peers in first grade, but it continued to limit the range of literacy activities Luke chose to explore to those sponsored by males. Similarly, Jane's apprehension about measuring up to adult literacy standards initially inhibited her from becoming a player rather than a spectator in literacy transactions. This tension abated as Jane came to trust the classroom as a safe place to take risks, but her risks were always measured against the high standards she continued to hold in her mind.

The examination of continuity and change in the children's learning biographies does not lead to easy assessments of the significance or ultimate outcomes of the changes observed. It is clear that, within this context—this community and these classrooms, the orientations toward literacy that children constructed within their families provided the framework for their interpretations of and responses to pedagogy and social relations in the classroom. The changes that were negotiated through participation in classroom literacy events altered parameters within these frameworks but did not radically transform the frameworks themselves.

It may be argued, of course, that radical transformations were not called for in any of these cases; the children were able to find modes of participating in classroom literacy events that were perceived as successful by themselves, their teachers, and their parents without confronting a need for greater change. This may have been because there were no deep conflicts between the children's and teachers' orientations toward literacy and also because the teachers' pedagogy

was based on respecting and nurturing the children's self-initiated and regulated activity. It is not possible to say what kinds of changes might have taken place in classrooms representing different pedagogical assumptions and goals; nor is it possible to say what might have happened had the children's orientations toward literacy been at greater odds with the pedagogy in these classrooms.[6] It *is* possible and important to say that, given the tensions that did exist within what appeared on the surface to be a relatively homogeneous community and a compatible classroom pedagogy, the path to literacy is not easily negotiated under even the most favorable circumstances and that the journey, like Odysseus's, is about exploring one's power and place in the world.

ENDNOTES

[1] Aspects of this writing are described more fully by Benedict (1985).

[2] Although this change is consistent with Bernstein's (1975) description of a shift toward visible pedagogies in later grades, he was talking about a starker change occurring between elementary and secondary levels. The change that occurred in this case was much less marked, but it nevertheless seemed to be caused by the perceived need to attend to the qualifications required for academic advancement.

[3] Downing et al. (1982) review research on the effect of the teacher's sex on children's reading achievement, reporting no evidence of any differences related to gender. Their concern was with group differences in standardized measures of achievement, however, not with the relevance of gender in the dynamics of literacy learning.

[4] Davies (1982) provides a detailed description of the nature and role of peer culture in the classroom, based on her study of 11-year-olds in Australia.

[5] Samples of these four children's writing were collected in grades three through five as data for studies by Benedict (1987) and Vine (1989). Beatrix's fantasy writing shows the fuller development of adventurous females as main characters who solve mysteries, catch criminals, and even kill them on occasion. She also wrote about male protagonists occasionally, and in one piece of realistic fiction described the physical revenge of a girl on the brother who had been harrassing her. Jane, on the other hand, still had males taking the lead in adventures both physically and mentally, and she did not finish a piece she began about two female ghost-seekers. Perhaps the most interesting pieces are two co-authored by Beatrix and Jane in which a girl takes the lead in solving mysteries, accompanied by her scaredy-cat brother. Jack and Luke continued to write adventure stories of violent confrontations. Jack's were full of blood and guts and body counts; Luke's focused more on science fiction technology. With the single exception of a murdered woman in one of Jack's adventure stories, the only time either included female characters in his stories was when writing personal narrative or realistic fiction, and then their roles were minor. Each wrote one short piece in which girls were the main characters, Jack's about two girls giving a party and Luke's about a girl wanting a horse. Their adventure stories continued to be characterized by fast-paced action, compared to the girls' more elaborate set-ups of problems and solutions. It's heartening that Beatrix found and pursued genres in which she could construct strong female characters; for the others, the gender-related tensions described in their earlier stories persisted.

The evidence from the learning biographies of the three children who were transferred out of Mr. Sullivan's classroom suggests that these children's orientations toward literacy were not any more at odds with the teachers' pedagogy than were some other children's, and that these children made changes of the same nature, though perhaps not to the same extent, as the others; but they were still not perceived as participating successfully in classroom literacy events by themselves, their teacher, and especially their parents. It was the parents' dissatisfaction, based largely on measures of reading achievement, that was crucial to the decisions to transfer the children to another classroom in which a more visible pedagogy was practiced. It was not possible to explore this issue further in the study, because my relationship with the teachers made communication with the parents difficult at that juncture.

chapter 8
Reflections on the Journey

In reporting and interpreting children's journeys toward literacy, this book has focused on the relations children were constructing in their social worlds. It has considered especially how children's orientations toward literacy were embedded in processes of defining themselves and others in regard to gender and work. Gender and work are certainly not the only important issues in self-definition and social relations, but the literature on psychological development suggests that they are central to children at the age when they begin school in our society, and the literature of critical theory and feminism argues that they are crucially implicated in status and dominance relations. While it may not have been the intended destination of the children's journeys, defining themselves in their immediate social worlds entailed positioning themselves within systems of power relations in the larger society.

Focusing on the particular dynamics of individual children's literacy learning and how those dynamics are connected to relations of gender and work in the larger society provides a vantage point for examining important aspects of literacy learning that are not even visible from emergent literacy and social construction of literacy perspectives. From this new vantage point, we see children constructing, not only literacy knowledge and practices, but themselves and their relations with others, their histories and their futures. We see children as complex human beings making places for themselves in a complex society, an activity that cannot be reduced to a predictable pattern of cognitive development or to socialization into a set of shared social practices. Nor is it satisfactory to reduce the individuality of children's learning to inborn differences in cognitive style and personality or to idiosyncrasies of social intention and experience. Rather, we must reconstruct our notions of individuality and social systems to account for the ways in which structuring processes of gender and class operate in the literacy learning of individuals. From this perspective, a more complex vision of literacy learning emerges, one full of

contradictions and tensions, but one that allows fuller understanding of the meaning of literacy in children's lives.

In exploring the interrelationships of literacy, gender, and work in families and in school, this book has raised more questions than it has answered. In particular, it has uncovered both the complexity of literacy, gender, and work as constructs and the particularity of their negotiated interrelationships in families and in classrooms. The following questions emerge as central to the interpretations offered in this book and the most significant for continuing research and dialogue.

To what extent is literacy itself, or certain forms of it, culturally defined as a gendered activity? This study and others (e.g., Willis, 1977; Downing et al., 1979) have raised the possibility that literacy itself may be regarded, in some subcultures or social classes at least, as primarily a female activity, and that males' engagement in literacy is therefore appropriately restricted. Street (1991), on the other hand, describes standard literacy as the province of men, schools, and churches, and there is no doubt that, historically, men have been in positions to control public forms of literacy and access to them. These two descriptions are not necessarily contradictory, since dominant groups may control activities which are executed by subordinate groups. Nevertheless these broad characterizations of literacy in relation to gender need refinement in consideration of the many varieties and uses of literacy, each of which may be marked for gender appropriateness in different social groups.

The finding in this study that, for the most part, girls were more fully engaged in reading while boys were more fully engaged in writing, invites further examination of how differences in the nature and status of reading and writing as cognitive and social activities may be related to gender-linked orientations toward activities. And the gender-based differences in the themes expressed in children's writing of fantasy fiction suggest the need for further study of gender differences in relation to literary genres and of the psychological and social role such differences may play, questions explored in studies by Radway (1984), Bleich (1986), and Flynn (1986) of gender dynamics in adults' reading. In addition, from the perspective of children's literacy learning, it is important to examine more fully the ways in which families and schools assign by gender the work of sponsoring and supporting young children's literacy activities.

What are the consequences of assigning women the work of supporting young children's literacy in families and in schools? The

findings of this study suggest that a division of labor that places mothers in charge of children's early literacy and schooling may play a key role in defining literacy as a gender-linked activity and may implicate literacy in the psychological and social dynamics of establishing gender identity. This is consistent with Chodorow's (1978) argument about the general effects of the family division of labor on children's development. The learning biographies of the children in this study show that the gender dynamics around literacy in each family involved a highly specific interaction of many factors, including in addition to the mother's predominant role, the participation by fathers in children's literacy activities, the gender and relative age of siblings and their role in each other's literacy, and the treatment by family members of literacy as work or play. In each case, the children constructed their own orientations toward literacy within a constellation of gender relations around literacy.

The study also shows that the negotiation of gender issues continued in the classroom as social relations were constructed in literacy events with teachers and peers. The findings suggest that the teacher's gender may play an important role in the dynamics of children's literacy learning, raising questions about the consequences of the division of labor which makes primary grade teaching female work. In addition, the study shows that the peer culture increasingly defined the parameters of gender relations in classroom literacy events and that the children's gender boundaries were often stronger and more traditional than their teachers'. Further study of the social and psychological dynamics around literacy in families and in classrooms is necessary to understand more specifically how gender relations are implicated in children's learning and the opportunities made available for learning.

What are the consequences of child rearing and pedagogical practices that treat literacy learning as various kinds of work? This study and others (Bernstein, 1975; Walkerdine, 1985) suggest that there are socially significant differences among childrearing and pedagogical practices that are based in adults' notions of the nature of literacy learning as work. Broadly speaking, a distinction may be drawn between definitions that sharply distinguish work and play and those that treat children's play as their work, among the relevant dimensions being whether the activity is initiated and regulated by an authoritative other or by oneself, whether the procedures of the activity are rigidly defined or open to flexible variation, and whether the outcome is measured against a single explicit standard or by multiple and diffuse criteria (Bernstein, 1975). The findings from this study suggest that, at least around definitions of literacy learning as

work or play, families and teachers were juggling contradictory beliefs and demands. The teachers espoused a largely play-centered pedagogy but accommodated to aspects of the school that called for a more work-centered pedagogy. The mothers who took responsibility for children's literacy at home varied considerably in their treatment of children's literacy as work or play, even though they seemed to be generally oriented toward play-centered childrearing practices. And the children themselves showed patterns of differential attention to the dimensions defining work and play in various contexts. In fact, the broad distinctions outlined above will surely need refinement as we examine more closely the ways that families' and schools' definitions of work and play are linked to status and dominance relations in the larger society and how such definitions intersect with approaches to literacy learning.

The consequences of these definitions require further examination in relation to gender as well, because the gender dynamics around children's literacy learning appeared to be related to whether literacy was treated as work or play by mothers. For some boys, tension around the female sponsorship of literacy was reduced when mothers treated literacy as play, and girls seemed to identify more strongly with mothers who treated literacy as play. In some cases, relations with older siblings who enacted school-based definitions of literacy as work contradicted mothers' play-centered approaches, and gender dynamics were an important part of these relations as well. These intersections of gender relations with practices defining literacy learning as work or play are worth exploring further, particularly in light of Walkerdine's (1985) analysis of the gender contradictions embedded in play-centered childrearing and pedagogical practices.

Notions of work and play are also relevant to the broader description of the gender appropriateness of various forms of literacy, since definitions of men's and women's work and play may intersect with ascriptions of gender-appropriate forms of literacy and how they are valued. Radway (1984) describes such dynamics in women's reading of romance fiction, because it is often regarded, by husbands and even themselves, as an illegitimate escape from their domestic work, whereas male forms of play are rarely so regarded. Only when women repositioned the romances as male forms of work by writing them for publication did their husbands value them. Further study is needed to examine the impact on children's literacy learning of the fact that forms of literacy modeled by mothers may be devalued by themselves and others unless they are made to fit definitions of male work or play.

How are gender- and work-related tensions that children experience in literacy learning renegotiated within the classroom, and to what outcomes? The data from this study suggest, first of all, that the

notion of a homogeneous community in relation to orientations toward literacy may be largely a myth. Although most of the families in this study could be characterized as members of what Bernstein (1975) calls the "new middle class," they were far from homogeneous in their beliefs and practices in regard to children's literacy learning. Given the intersection of literacy with relations of status and dominance in the larger society, families and communities must wrestle with contradictory definitions and values that lead to inherent tensions in a complex, hierarchical and patriarchal society. Each family has its own way of understanding and responding to the contradictions and managing the resulting tensions. Teachers, individually and collectively, confront the same set of contradictions; and their pedagogies reflect their ways of dealing with them. To date, we have relatively little understanding of the variety of ways in which families and teachers handle these contradictions.

Secondly, this study shows that, in constructing their own orientations toward literacy, children also confront and respond to contradictory meanings of literacy in the larger society as they are expressed first within families and then within classrooms. Thus children may experience tensions in literacy learning that are related to the contradictions they encounter in negotiating gender and work relations with parents, siblings, teachers, and peers. The evidence from the learning biographies in this study suggests that classroom pedagogical practices and changing social relations allowed new ways of managing old tensions and also introduced new tensions as well, but did not alter children's basic investments in literacy to any appreciable extent. This does not mean that the changes were insignificant, however, since the changes described did modify the children's relations with adults and peers around issues of gender and work. It is impossible to tell without longer-term data how lasting these changes were or what their ultimate impact was on children's orientations toward literacy. Further study is also necessary to examine the nature and extent of changes negotiated when tensions are greater than those observed here or when they are handled in different ways by teachers.

Finally, this study can say little about the larger social outcomes of the kinds of changes negotiated in these classrooms. To the extent that individual children altered their psychological dispositions and social actions involving the interrelationship of literacy, gender, and work, they may have positioned themselves somewhat differently within status and dominance relations in the larger society. More refined and powerful answers to all the questions framed here are necessary in order to address the question of social outcomes for individuals, a goal that has long been proclaimed as a mission of public education, with literacy playing a crucial role.

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Changes in social outcomes for individuals, however, are not changes in systems of social relations. The issues raised in this study about the interrelationship of literacy, gender, and work suggest ways that literacy is implicated in maintaining status and dominance relations based on the structuring processes of gender and class. To the extent that the dynamics of children's literacy learning serve to reproduce present social relations, however, they can also contribute to its transformation. The potential for transformation is unlikely to be realized, though, unless scholars and teachers become more attentive to and knowledgeable about the intersection of pedagogy and relations of status and dominance (Giroux, 1987; Harman & Edelsky, 1989). The findings from this study suggest that there is no politically neutral ground for literacy learning, either in families or in schools, and that the roots of change must reach deeply into the organization of families and of schools. Only by reconceptualizing literacy in our research and teaching as an action through which people define themselves and construct their relations with other people[1] can we fully understand what is happening in literacy instruction and make informed ethical choices about the social worlds we construct together inside and outside families and schools.

ENDNOTES

[1] David Bloome and I also made this argument in a paper (Bloome & Solsken, 1988) presented to the American Anthropological Association.

APPENDIX
The Construction of the Learning Biographies

The learning biographies, presented in narrative form in this text, are the result of the sifting and interpretation of a large amount of data. During the data collection period, this sifting and interpretation was a collective process in which individual members of the research team chose different ways to participate. Table 1 summarizes the roles of different researchers and the data they contributed. It shows that, in addition to over 1,100 pages of fieldnotes based on more than 600 hours of classroom observation, data sources included more than 1,000 photographs of classroom activities, photocopies of student writing, interviews with students and their parents about the children's reading and writing, and audiotapes of authors' circles and of students reading individually with an adult.

All researchers were also involved in data analysis. Throughout each academic year, members of the research team participated in the weekly meetings where data were shared and discussed, resulting in summary statements about the children's literacy learning during each observation cycle. During the summers following the kindergarten and first-grade years, various team members worked collaboratively to compile and review the data and interpretations from that year. During the second grade year, other members of the research team had defined particular areas of interest and pursued their own analyses over the summer, while I compiled the data for the individual learning biographies.

Thus at the end of the data collection period, the biographies took the form of summary statements about the children's literacy learning for each observation cycle and the compiled data related to those statements. These were my primary resources for composing the narrative biographies, but this description does not adequately convey the extent to which our discussions had framed larger perceptions and understandings of the children. Various members of the research team also worked together on many conference presentations, which ex-

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tended and deepened our collaborative interpretations and put words to them. Although I composed the word portraits that appear on these pages, the language often came from our discussions and was my attempt to capture our mutual images of the children.

In addition to the interpretations we forged together, I also had as resources the separate analyses pursued by several members of the team. Jean McClellan had written her doctoral dissertation (McClellan, 1984) on the basis of the data she collected in the kindergarten year on the children's strategies for comprehending written texts. Susan Benedict had written a paper analyzing the children's criteria for evaluating their own writing and the writing of their peers during second grade, and for her dissertation (Benedict, 1987) she continued to study the children's evaluation of student writing during third and fourth grades. And Lenore Carlisle had used her experience collecting data on the children's responses to literature as the basis for one of her doctoral comprehensive examination papers.

The composition of the narrative biographies involved the integrated use of all these resources, beginning with the summary statements as a sort of outline to be fleshed out with examples from the data. As always, the story changes in the telling, though, and writing the narratives often raised questions requiring new interpretations of the data and searches for previously overlooked evidence. And the developing storyline, with its demands for coherence and connectedness, undoubtedly shaped choices of both data and interpretation, what would be included and excluded, what highlighted and slighted. To the extent that forming the storylines was a conscious process, it was governed by my interest in the children's individuality and the unexpected tensions that appeared in their literacy learning. The detailed kindergarten learning biographies of Beatrix, Jack, Luke, and Jane in Chapters 4 and 5 were written before the analysis of gender and work was initiated, and they were not substantively changed as a result of that analysis. The narratives of my home visits with these four children and their families and of their first- and second-grade years, as well as the shorter kindergarten biographies of the other children, were written with the themes of gender and work in mind. In composing the biographies, however, I attempted to draw the sketches in broader strokes, capturing images of the children as the research team had come to see them. To make sure that the stories had not gone far astray, I asked Susan Benedict to read and comment on the final versions of the biographies in light of her understanding of the children. However, it is important to emphasize the point that, however faithful they may be to the data and to the perceptions of more than one adult, the biographies are more like an artist's sketches than

a photographer's snapshots; they represent the vision of particular adults who had particular relationships with the children (and with each other) under particular circumstances. The biographies are no less interpretive than the analytical discussions which frame them.

Because individual biographies were the most personally revealing way to present data about the children in this study, there were tensions in the composing of the biographies between the need for verisimilitude and the obligation to protect the privacy of the children and their families. Although I have used pseudonyms for the children and their families, their anonymity is compromised by the fact that I have used the actual names of the teachers who were my co-researchers. For that reason, I have been careful to report only those details about the children and their families that seem crucial to my interpretations of their stories. I have not described the children's physical appearance, for example, even though such descriptions might help readers bring the stories to life. Nor have I identified the specific professions of the children's parents, even though such information might enrich the consideration of class issues. I have included details that make the children more identifiable, such as the gender and relative age of siblings, when the analysis of gender and work issues was impossible without this information. I chose not to include biographies of three children whose stories could not be told in a way that I believed was true to the data while also protecting the privacy of the families.

Finally, it is important to identify these as only partially authorized biographies. The children's parents gave informed consent for their participation in the study and were sent a copy of the summary statements from the kindergarten year. Three of the families received a copy of their child's kindergarten biography from Chapter 4 or 5; the fourth family had moved away by the time the biographies were written. Beyond that, the children and their families were not asked to review or comment on the biographies. The issues involved in this decision were many: the children were the primary subjects of the biographies, and I believed (perhaps mistakenly) that they were too young to be asked to take on this responsibility; the parents, on the other hand, were not present in the classroom or during my home visits with the children and so had no first-hand knowledge of most of the data. Also, because considerable time elapsed between the data collection and the writing of the biographies, the interpretations of the children and their families would have been retrospective rather than contemporary. All of this is not to say that the reactions of the children and their parents would not have been informative and useful, but they would not have been straightforward confirmations or disconfimations of the interpretations in the biographies.

Table 1. Data Collected in Kindergarten, First, and Second Grades

KINDERGARTEN		
Judith Solsken	Researcher	Home visits with children—Aug Parent interviews—Sept–Oct June Fieldnotes of classroom observation—Sept–June Photocopies of writing—Sept–June Photographs of classroom—Sept–June Parent questionnaires—Jan–Feb Data compilation—July–Aug
Susan Benedict	Kindergarten Teacher	Print awareness survey[a]—Oct June Data compilation—July–Aug
Marilyn Gundersheim	Kindergarten Aide	Reading interviews[b]—Apr–May Data compilation—July–Aug
Jim Sullivan	First Grade Teacher	Writing interviews[b]—Apr–May
Jean McClellan	Graduate Student Researcher	Fieldnotes of classroom observation—Oct–June Audiotaped individual reading[c]—Apr–June Data compilation—July–Aug
FIRST GRADE		
Judith Solsken	Researcher	Fieldnotes of classroom observation—Sept–June Photocopies of writing—Sept–June Photographs of classroom—Sept–June Parent interviews—June Data compilation—July–Aug
Susan Benedict	Kindergarten Teacher	Writing conferences—periodic Writing interviews—May–June Data compilation—July–Aug
Marilyn Gundersheim	Kindergarten Teacher	Audiotaped individual reading—Fall
Jim Sullivan	First Grade Teacher	Data compilation—July–Aug

[a] This instrument was based on Marie Clay's (1973) *Sand* test.

[b] The teachers developed their interview protocols on the basis of Carolyn Burke's Reading Interview (Harste & Burke, 1977).

[c] These sessions were based on guidelines for conducting miscue analysis (Y. M. Goodman & Burke, 1972), modified to accommodate the children's status as fledgling readers. The data collected are fully reported by McClellan (1984).

Lenore Carlisle	Graduate Student Researcher	Fieldnotes of classroom observation—Oct–June Reading interviews—May
Anne Homza	Student Researcher	Fieldnotes of classroom observation—Oct–May Audiotaped individual reading—Spring

SECOND GRADE

Judith Solsken	Researcher	Fieldnotes of classroom observation—Sept–June Photocopies of writing—Sept–June Photographs of classroom—Sept–June Home interviews with children—Aug
Susan Benedict	Second Grade Teacher	Audiotapes of sharing of writing—Sept–June Writing interviews—periodic
Lenore Carlisle	Graduate Student Researcher	Reading interviews—Jan Audiotaped individual reading—periodic

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